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ANNEX

ZFB

Protestant

Index	No.
Addition to Plain People on Family Prayer	9
Berens, Rev. E. Le Culte P. a Haute Voix	15
Bishop, office of a	11
Blomfield, C. J. Manual Fam. Prayer	5
Church a Nursery Methodist People	14
Culte Public I. 15	
Devotions, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 7, 14,	10½
Duty of Family Devotion	10½
" a Morning & Evening Devotion	10
L'Eglise la Mer Nourrice de P.	14
Family Prayer 5, 7, 9, 10, 10½	
Forms of Prayer for Families	7
Gauthier, Le Culte Public, Berens	15
Gründe warum protestantisch	13
Invitation to Prayer	4
Ken, Bp. Manual of Prayer for Y.P.	2
Onderdeel, Rev. Bischoffswunde	11
Prayer 4, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10	10½
Prayer for Young Persons	2

Index	Nos.
Prescribed Forms of Prayer, Public	8
Protestant Episcopal Church	12, 13
Psalms: A Christian Manual	6
Raisons pour Ment. de l'Eglise P. E.	12
Sacra Privata, Wilson's	1
Self Examination "	3
Wilson, Bp. T. Sacra Privata	1
Self Examination	3
Worship Public, Prayers for	6, 8
Young Persons, Kens Prayers for	2

SACRA PRIVATA.

THE

PRIVATE MEDITATIONS

AND

PRAYERS

OF THE

RIGHT REV. THOMAS WILSON, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN.

ACCOMMODATED TO GENERAL USE.

Lord, teach us to pray.—Luke xi. 1.

NEW-YORK:
PUBLISHED BY THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY,
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1854.

PREFACE.

The truly Reverend Doctor Thomas Wilson, fifty-eight years Bishop of Sodor and Man, was blessed with the spirit of prayer in a very uncommon measure: of which his *Sacra Privata*, or *Private Meditations and Prayers*, are an eminent instance.

They have hitherto been locked up from the world in an expensive book; and are mixed throughout with so much meditation and prayer that can come properly from the Clergy only, (to whom they are an invaluable treasure) as to unfit them for general use.

They are now presented to the public in a separate volume; so that pious Christians may, at a reasonable expense, distribute them among such people as either will not or cannot buy them; and the petitions peculiar to the Clergy only, are all thrown out.

The pious reader will find these Meditations and Prayers too long, according to the present division of them, which there is no occasion to adhere to. He may take them up and lay them down at his own discretion and convenience. It is recommended to him to go through them regularly, and to continue the use of them his whole life; selecting such parts for more frequent meditation as are best adapted to his necessity and disposition.

As prayer is one of the most important works a man can be engaged in, and few find themselves able to discharge it in the manner they wish to do, it is humbly hoped, that this book, if duly attended to as it deserves, may, with God's assistance, teach them to pray; may lead our thoughts to meditate on religious subjects; and habituate us to clothe our meditations in the language of decent, pious, and fervent prayer.

That this valuable book may have this effect, is the intention and the earnest prayer of

The Editor

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CONTENTS.

	Page
On Devotion and Prayer	7
Prayer for a devout Spirit	8
——— for right dispositions in Prayer	9
Duties of a Christian—On Prayer	10
Preparatory Prayer	11

MORNING PRAYER. 11—26.

Miscellaneous	11—14
Lord's Prayer paraphrased	14—26
Gloria Patri	16
Prayer for Faith, Virtue, Industry	17
Intercessions for all Conditions of Men—for the Sick—for Kings and Rulers—for Servants, Relations, &c.	17—18
Intercession for all who have asked our Prayers	18
Prayer for Virtue in our *Words*	19
———, Miscellaneous	19—20
——— for Grace	20
——— for Faith—against Wavering	21
——— against Covetousness, &c.	22
——— for Charity, &c.	22—23
——— for Repentance—Humility	23
On the Way of a Happy Life	24
On Christian Perfection	24
Prayers, Miscellaneous	24—25
Intercession for the Sick and Dying	25

PRAYERS AT NOON. 26—30.

General Intercessions	26
Thanksgivings	26—27
Lord's Prayer paraphrased	27—30

EVENING PRAYER. 30—35.

Thanksgiving for Preservation and Grace, &c.	30
Prayer for Pardon, for Grace	31
——— for Protection	31
Lord's Prayer paraphrased	32—33
Examination	33
Prayer for Preparation for Death	34
——— for Charitable Affections	34
——— for Safety in Sleep—for Grace	34

SUNDAY MEDITATIONS. 35—41.

A Daily Form of Thanksgiving	35
Prayer for true Gratitude	36
On Providence, and Prayers accordingly	37

Page
Birth-Day, Thanksgiving, and Prayer . . . . . 37—38
New-Year's Day, Thanksgiving and Prayer . . . . 38—39
Lord's Day, Prayer for Love of the Sabbath 39
Prayers for all Mankind . . . . . 39—40

MONDAY MEDITATIONS. 41—45.

Resignation . . . . . 41—44
Business 44
Master.—Servant 44

TUESDAY MEDITATIONS. 45—53.

Trouble, Persecution, Afflictions, &c. 45
Resignation . . . . . 45—47
Look unto Jesus 47
Suffering 49
Afflictions 50
Temptation 51
Despair, Hope, Resignation, Injuries, Persecution, Enemies . 51
In Time of War, or Public Dangers . . . . . 52—53
Judgment Day.—Zaccheus 53

WEDNESDAY MEDITATIONS. 53—64.

Covetousness . . . . . 53—54
Fasting 54
In time of Trouble . . . . . 55—56
Difficulties.—In a Law-Suit 56
Faith . . . . . 57—58
Lively Faith 58
Self-Denial . . . . . 58—60
Take up the Cross 60
Virtues of a Holy Life 61
Self-Denial 62
Mortification 63
Temperance.—Fasting 64

THURSDAY MEDITATIONS. 64—68.

Religious Conversation . . . . . 64—65
Against Anger 65
Forgiveness of Injuries 66
Slander 67
Uncharitableness 67

FRIDAY MEDITATIONS 68—74.

Penitence . . . . . 68—72
Good use of Time.—Prayer for the Jews 72
In Time of Public Distraction . . . . 72—73
Christ's Patience 73
Christ's Love and Charity 74

Page

SATURDAY MEDITATIONS. 74—96.

Preparation for Death . . . . . 74—89
(1) Worldly Preparation. (2) Repentance. (3) Uprightness. (4) Heavenly-Mindedness. (5) Self-Denial. (6) Charity. (7) Resignation. (8) Devotion, or timely Preparation for Death . . . . . 74—79
Sickness . . . . . 74—79
The Sting of Death 80
Holiness and Happiness graduated 80
Reasons for Activity and for Hope 81
Watchfulness 81
Justification.—Faith in Christ and in God 82
Death our Deliverance 83
Readiness and Preparation for Death 83
Death of Friends.—Preparation for Death 87
Repentance, &c. 87
Ejaculations in Sickness and Remorse 88
Charity 89
Alms 90
Charity 92
The *Litany* 93
The Penitent's Support 95

EJACULATIONS, &c. 96—101.

Miscellaneous 96
Love of God.—Human Weakness 96
Follow Christ 97
Wilful Sin.—Penitent 97
Eternity.—Example.—Perfection 98
Holiness 98
Pestilence, or Danger.—Prayer 99
After Prayer.—Riches.—Devotion 99
Holy Scriptures.—Perseverance 100
Morning.—Night.—Devoutness 100
Power of Christ.—Charity 101
Collects—their tendency 102

SELECTIONS from Bishop Ken's Manual of Prayers, : . . 105

ON DEVOTION AND PRAYER.

TRUE Devotion consists in having our hearts always *devoted* to God, as the sole fountain of all happiness; and who is ready to hear and help his otherwise helpless, miserable creatures.

It is to be attained,

1*st*. By earnest prayer. HE THAT HUNGERETH AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS, WILL CERTAINLY BE FILLED.

2*dly*. By possessing our hearts with a deep sense of our own *misery*, our *wants*, and *danger*. This is the grace of *humility*.

3*dly*. By considering God's *goodness*, *power*, and *readiness* to help us. This is called *faith in God*.

Lastly. By convincing our hearts of the vanity of every thing else to afford us any real help or comfort. This is to be effected by *self-denial*.

Dying persons are generally more devout than others, because they then see their own misery, that nothing in this world can help them, and that God is their only refuge.

We must change our lives, if we desire to change our hearts. God will have no regard to the prayers of those who have none to his commands.

The Spirit of God will not dwell in a *divided heart*. We cannot feel the pleasure of devotion, while the world is our delight. Not that all pleasures are criminal; but the closer union we have with the world, the less is our union with God. A Christian, therefore, who strives after devotion, should taste sensual pleasures very sparingly; should make necessity, not bodily delight, his rule.

In order to dispose our hearts to devotion, THE ACTIVE LIFE to be preferred to the CONTEMPLATIVE.

To be doing good to mankind, disposes the soul most powerfully to devotion. And, indeed, we are surrounded with motives to piety and devotion, if we would but mind them.

The *poor* are designed to excite our *liberality*;—the *miserable*,

our *pity*;—the *sick*, our *assistance*;—the *ignorant*, our *instructions*;—those that are *fallen*, our *helping hand*. In those that are *vain*, we see the vanity of this world. In those that are *wicked*, our *own frailty*. When we see *good* men rewarded it confirms our *hope*; and when *evil men* are punished, it excites us to *fear*.

He that would be *devout*, must beware of indulging a habit of *wandering in prayer*. It is a crime that will grow upon us, and will deprive us of the blessings we pray for.

Avoid, as much as may be, *multiplicity of business*. Neither the innocency, nor the goodness of the employment, will excuse us, if it possess our hearts when we are praying to God.

When our Lord bids us TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW, he intended to hinder those *cares* and *fears* which are apt to distract our devotions,—which are the more unreasonable, because they never can change the state of things.

Never be curious to know what passes in the world, any further than your duty obliges you; it will only distract the mind when it should be better employed.

Never intermit devotion, if you can help it; you will return to your duty, like Samson when his locks were cut, weak and indifferent as other people of the world.

The oftener we renew our intercourse with God, the greater will be our devotion.

Frequent prayer, as it is an exercise of holy thoughts, is a most natural remedy against the power of sin.

Importunity makes no change in God, but it creates in us such dispositions as God thinks fit to reward.

Make it a law to yourself to meditate before you pray; as also to make certain pauses, to see whether your heart goes along with your lips.

They whose hearts *desire nothing*, *pray for nothing*.

Give me, O God, the spirit of true devotion, such as may give life to all my prayers, so that they may find acceptance in thy sight, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

SACRA PRIVATA.

Matt. vi. 6. *Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*

How good is God! who will not only give us what we pray for, but will reward us for going to him, and laying our wants before him.

May I always present myself before God—with a firm faith and hope in his promises and mercy;—with great reverence to his infinite Majesty;—with the humility of an offender;—and with a full purpose of keeping all God's commandments.

May the thoughts of eternity quicken my devotions—my wants make me earnest;—my backslidings make me persevere;—and may I never wilfully give way to any distracting thoughts.

May I wait with patience, and leave it to thee, my God and Father, *how* and *when* to grant my petitions.

He that has learned to pray as he ought, has got the secret of a holy life.

It is of greater advantage to us than we imagine, that God does not grant our petitions immediately. We learn by that, that whereunto we have already attained, "it was the gift of God."

The best way to prevent wandering in prayer is, not to let the mind wander too much at other times, but to have God always in our minds in the whole course of our lives. The end of prayer is not to inform God, but to give man a sight of his own misery; to raise his soul towards heaven, and to put him in mind, that there is his Father and his inheritance.

Matt. vii. 7. *Ask, and it shall be given you.* Grant me, Lord, a faith which will make me know my wants, that I may ask them with earnestness and humility, and depend upon the gracious promise.

THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN.

THAT man leads a sincere Christian life,

1*st.* Who endeavours to serve and obey God to the best of his understanding and power;

2*dly.* Who strives to please his neighbour to edification;

3*dly.* Who endeavours to do his duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call him.

Whoever would continue in the practice of these things unto his life's end, it is necessary that he should call himself often to an account, whether he does so or not;—constantly pray for grace to know, and to do his duty;—and preserve himself in such a teachable temper, as to be always ready to receive the truth, when it is fairly proposed to him.

It is a rudeness amongst men to ask a favour, and not stay for an answer. And do we count it no fault to pray for blessings, and never to think of them afterwards,—never to wait for them,—never to give God thanks for them.

Let us make prayer familiar to us; for without the help of God, we are every hour in danger.

The devil knows, that when we have a relish for prayer, and apply ourselves in good earnest to it, we are in the way of life; he therefore strives by all ways possible to divert us.

Let us not run over our prayers with an insensible and distracted mind.

Let your prayers be as particular as may be, against the sins of your particular state, and for the graces which you in particular do most stand in need of. This is the best preservative against sin;—makes us best acquainted with our condition; puts us continually in mind of mending what is amiss; lets us see what particular graces we most want, what are most needful for the

cure of our own particular corruption and disorder;—and is the best trial of our hearts. For example; if I pray for charity, and for every instance which is necessary to render me truly charitable, I pray for grace—to avoid evil speaking,—to pray for my enemies,—to do them good, &c. and so of all other sins and graces.

God grant that I may never seek his face in vain.

Luke xi. 1. *Lord, teach us to pray.* Pour upon us the spirit of supplication and prayer.

God will deny us nothing that we ask in the name of his Son.

PRAYERS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

When we offer our prayers through his mediation, it is then *he* that prays, *his* love that intercedes, *his* blood that pleads, it is *he* who obtains all from his Father.

PREPARATORY PRAYER.

O Holy Spirit of Grace! give us a true sight of our miseries, and a sincere shame and sorrow, when we make confession of our sins; a feeling sense of our need of mercy, and a hope of obtaining pardon, when we beg it for thy Son's sake. May we resign our wills to thee and thy goodness, when we pray for temporal things;—and when we pray for spiritual graces, may we hunger and thirst after righteousness. Give us a real love for thy Holy Word, and grace to hear it with attention. May we thankfully close with all the means of grace and salvation. When we praise thee for thy works of nature and of grace, and give thee thanks for thy mercies, let us do it with high esteem and gratitude. Cause us to hear thy Holy Word with faith and attention, and to profit by what we hear, that we may return from thy church with a blessing.

MORNING PRAYER.

Joshua xxiv. 15. *Choose you this day whom you will serve.*

WHOM have I in heaven but thee, O Lord? and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee. Thou art

my God, and I will thank thee; thou art my God, and I will serve thee. Be thou my only Ruler and Governor.

They that have a convenient place to sleep in, and they that have the comfort of sleep, have both great reason to be thankful. And even they that want these mercies, ought to bless God, if in the midst of their afflictions he is pleased to refresh them with the comforts of grace.

Gracious God, continue to me these favours so long, and in such measure, as shall most contribute to thy honour and my salvation. And in great mercy support and relieve all that want these blessings.

What shall I offer unto the Lord for his mercies renewed unto me every morning?—*The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.* Psalm li. 17.

But most unfit is mine to be to God presented, until I have obtained his pardon, through the merits of the Lord Jesus, for the many sins by which it has been defiled.

Jer. iii. 12, 13. *I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.*

Psalms xxxii. 5. *I acknowledge my sin unto thee, O God, and mine iniquities will I not hide.*

I do therefore implore thy pardon, and plead thy gracious promises, *with full purpose of heart*, by the assistance of thy grace, never again to return to folly.

Jer. xvii. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?*

I cannot answer for my own heart; but there is no word, O Lord, impossible with thee. In *thee* I do put my trust; let me never be put to confusion.

Keep it ever in the heart of thy servant, that *it is indeed an evil thing and bitter to offend the Lord.*

Keep me from presumptuous sins, that I may never grieve thy Holy Spirit, or provoke thee to leave me to myself.

Matt. xxvi. 41. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.*

Lord, make me ever mindful of my infirmities and backslidings, that I may be more watchful, and more importunate for grace, for the time to come.

1 Peter v. 8. *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*

O Lord, grant that this adversary of our souls may never find me off my guard, or from under thy protection.

Matt. xvi. 24. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

O my Saviour! how long have I professed to follow thee, without following the blessed steps of thy most holy life,—thy patience and humility,—thy great disregard for the world, its pleasures, profits, honours, and all its idols.

O Lord, obtain for me the spirit of mortification and self-denial, that I may follow thee, as I hope to live with thee for ever. *Amen.*

Matt. vi. 24. *No man can serve two masters. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*

May my fear and love never be divided between thee and the world. May I never set up any thing, O God, in competition with thee in the possession of my heart. May I never attempt to reconcile thy service with that world which is at enmity with thee. my God and Father!

Mark x. 17. *What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

O that this love of God may be the commanding principle of my soul! May I always have this comfortable proof of his love abiding in me, that I study to please him, and to keep his commandments. And may my love to my neighbour be such as he has command-

ed, that I may forgive, and give, and love, as becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Eccles. xii. 13. *Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man;* that is, the happiness of man.

May I, great God, continue in thy fear all the day long. May I keep thy statutes, and observe thy laws.

Heb. iv. 13. *All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

Grant that I may always live and act as having thee, O God, the constant witness of my conduct, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Eccles. ix. 10. *Whatsoever thy hand findteh to do, do it with all thy might:—for the night cometh when no man can work.*

Make me, O Lord, ever sensible of the great evil of delaying the work in its season, which thou hast appointed, lest the night surprise me unawares.

1 John v. 14. *This is the confidence we have in God, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.*

That it may be unto thy servant according to this word. I beseech thee to hear me in the full importance of that holy prayer which thy blessed Son hath taught us.

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN:

In whom we live, and move, and have our being; grant that I, and all Christians, may live worthy of this glorious relation, and "that we may not sin, knowing that we are accounted thine."

We are thine by adoption; O make us thine by the choice of our will.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

O God, whose name is great, wonderful and holy, grant that I and all thy children, may glorify thee, not only with our lips, but in our lives; that others, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.

THY KINGDOM COME.

May the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms

of the Lord and of his Christ. And may all that own thee for their King, become thy faithful subjects, and obey thy laws. Dethrone, O God, and destroy Satan, and his kingdom; and enlarge the kingdom of grace.

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

We adore thy goodness, O God, in making thy will known to us in thy holy word. May this thy word be the rule of our will, of our desires, of our lives, and actions. May we ever sacrifice our will to thine; be pleased with all thy choices for ourselves and others, and adore thy providence in the government of the world.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

O Heavenly Father, who knowest what we have need of, give us the necessaries and comforts of this life with thy blessings; but, above all, give us the bread that nourisheth to eternal life.

Acts xvii. 25. *O God, who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things*, give us grace to impart to such as are in want, of what thou hast given more than our daily bread.

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US.

Make us truly sensible of thy goodness, and mercy, and patience, towards us, that we may, from our hearts, forgive every one his brother their trespasses.

May my enemies ever have place in my prayers, and in thy mercy.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

Support us, O Heavenly Father, under all our saving trials, and grant that they may yield us the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

From all sin and wickedness, from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death, good Lord, deliver us.

Deliver us from the evil of *sin*, and from the evil of *punishment*.

Deliver us, O Heavenly Father, from our evil and corrupt nature, from the temptations and snares of an evil world,—and from falling again into the sins we have repented of.

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

By thy Almighty power, O King of Heaven, for the glory of thy name, and for the love of a Father, grant us all these blessings which thy Son hath taught us to pray for.

Unto him that is able to do for us abundantly more than we can ask or think, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. *Amen.*

To God the Creator, the Preserver, and Disposer of all things, be the glory of all the good wrought in us, by us, and upon us.

Blessing, and *glory*, and *wisdom*, and *thanksgiving*, and *honour*, and *power*, and *might*, be unto our God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Thine *infinite power*, *wisdom*, *goodness*, *faithfulness*, and *truth*, are the only sure foundation on which we may surely depend. O give us a firm faith in these thy glorious perfections.

With angels and archangels, and all the company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee, and saying Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD of Hosts, Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O GOD most high. *Amen.*

Jude 24, 25. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. *Amen.*

Rom. xi. 36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.*

Rom. xvi. 27. To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Mark ix. 23. *All things are possible to him that believeth.*

Yes, Lord, and therefore I beg that faith of him to whom all things are possible, that I may be able to *discover*, to *avoid*, to *resist*, and to *root out* whatever is evil in me.

O Jesus, obtain this grace for thy otherwise helpless creature.

Grant that I may this day escape all the snares laid for me, by the *devil*, the *world*, or mine own corrupt heart.

Grant that I may this day omit no part of my duty.

1 Tim. iv. 15. *Give thyself wholly to these things, that thy profiting may appear to all.*

God grant that I may do so; and I pray God preserve me from ease, idleness, and trifling away my precious time.

Philemon 4. *I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers.*

Extend, and suit thy graces to all conditions of men, that we may all be upright in our dealings, obedient to our governors, peaceable in our lives, sober, honest, temperate, chaste in our conversation, and charitable to the poor, and one towards another.

Increase the number and the graces of all such as love and fear thee. Enlighten the minds of the ignorant, awaken the consciences of the careless, silence the gainsayers, convert the profane, and all that hold the truth in unrighteousness.

Rebuke the spirit of antichrist, idolatry, and libertinism,—the sins of drunkenness, whoredom, litigiousness, and defrauding the public.

In tender mercy, remember, O God, all sick and dying persons, that they omit nothing that is necessary to make their peace with thee. Be gracious unto all that are in affliction of mind or body, or under any pressing calamity,—all desolate widows and fatherless children,—all that call upon thee in their distress, and have none else to help them.

Prov. xxi. 1. *The king's heart is in the hands of*

the Lord; as the rivers of waters, he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Let this, thy power, O Lord, be magnified on all in authority, that we may be governed with truth and justice, by men fearing and honouring God, protecting the Christian religion, and punishing evil doers. To this end vouchsafe them, I beseech thee, all the graces necessary for their high station, and for their eternal happiness.

Col. iv. 1. *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.*

O Heavenly Lord and Master, bless me with good and faithful servants. Let thy blessing be upon them and upon my affairs committed to their care; and may I never be wanting in my duty to them, for Jesus Christ's sake.

RELATIONS, BENEFACTORS, &C.

Be gracious, O Lord, to all my relations, benefactors, enemies, and all that have desired my prayers;—all who, by their own labours, do minister to our necessities;—together with all our known and unknown benefactors. Render, O God, a good reward, and a plentiful return, to all those who have been kind and charitable Grant that we may all so live here, as that we may meet hereafter in the paradise of God.

John xvi. 23. *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.*

These are what I ask, O God and Father, above all things, for myself and for all that have desired my prayers, that we may be restored to thy likeness, and never deface it by our sins; that the image of Satan may be destroyed in us; that all carnal affections may die in us; and that all things belonging to the Spirit may dwell in our hearts by faith; that thy name. and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, may be glorified in us, and we in him; that our hearts may be entirely thine; that we may never grieve thy Holy Spirit; but

that we may continue thine for ever, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

Ephes. iv. 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

Grant, O God, that I may delight in thy law; that my conversation may be truly Christian.

May I never hear with pleasure, nor ever repeat such things as may dishonour God, or injure my neighbour, or my own character.

James iv. 11. *Speak not evil one of another.*

Ephes. v. 4. *Foolish talking or jesting are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.*

Psalm cxli. 3. *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips.*

Matt. xii. 34. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. How can ye, being evil, speak good things?*

O Holy Spirit of Grace, enable me to overcome the shame of a degenerate age, which will hear nothing with delight, but what concerns this world. O touch my heart with the true love of God, the excellencies of his laws, the pleasantness of his service, and the wonders of his providences. This I beg for Jesus Christ's sake.

John xv. 7. *Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

These, O Jesus, are the things that I ask. *Intercede for me!* that I may be truly sensible of the diseases I labour under, and thankfully embrace the means which thy goodness hath ordained for my recovery.

Grant that the end of all my actions and designs may be the glory of God.

Enable me to resist all the sinful appetites of my corrupt nature.

Grant that I may hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Vouchsafe me the spirit of adoption,—of supplication and prayer, of praise and thanksgiving.

Obtain for me, O Jesus, the graces of mortification

and self-denial; the graces of a true humility, and the fear of God.

Grant, O God, that I may never knowingly live one moment under thy displeasure, or in any known sin.

Grant, O God, that as I have been regenerate, and made thy child by adoption and grace, I may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Enable me, gracious God, to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust, that I may be partaker of the Divine nature.

Lord, grant me grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and with a pure heart and mind to follow thee, the only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Let thy love, O God, be shed abroad in my heart, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and grant that it may appear in my *life*, my *conversation*, my *words*, and *actions*, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Blessed be God that I was admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion. Grant, O God, that I may eschew all those things that are contrary to my profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Keep me, I beseech thee, O Heavenly Father, under the protection of thy good providence, and make me to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Put away from me all hurtful things, and give me those things that be profitable for me, through Jesus Christ.

Mercifully grant unto me, O God, such a measure of thy grace, that, running the way of thy commandments, I may obtain thy gracious promises, and be made partaker of thy heavenly treasure, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Forgive me those things whereof my conscience is afraid, and give me those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ.

That I may obtain that which thou dost promise,

make me to love that which thou dost command, through Jesus Christ.

Keep me from all things hurtful, and lead me to all things necessary to my salvation, through Jesus Christ.

The Lord deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me to his heavenly kingdom: To whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

O that thy Holy Spirit may direct and rule my heart, O God, through Jesus Christ.

Of thy bountiful goodness, O Lord, keep me I beseech thee, from all things that may hurt me, that I may cheerfully accomplish those things which thou wouldst have done, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Grant, O God, that I may be cleansed from all my sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind, through Jesus Christ.

Deliver me, O Lord, from the bonds of those sins, which, through my frailty, I have committed, for Jesus Christ's sake.

FAITH.

O that I may believe in thee, O God, and put my whole confidence and trust in thee alone, and not in any thing that I myself can do.

Grant, O God, that I may so perfectly, and without all doubt, believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that my faith in thy sight may never be reproved, for the sake of the same Jesus Christ.

AGAINST WAVERING.

Grant, O God, that we may not be carried about with every blast of vain doctrine, but that we may be firmly established in the truth of thy holy Gospel, through Jesus Christ.

Grant, O God, that I may perfectly know thy Son Jesus Christ to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life,—the Author of the Way, the Teacher of the Truth, and the Giver of Life; that I may steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life, through the same Jesus Christ.

COVETOUSNESS.

Give me grace to forsake all covetous desires, and inordinate love of riches and pleasures, through Jesus Christ.

Grant that I may both perceive and know, what things I ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same, through Jesus Christ.

Grant me, O God, the true circumcision of the Spirit, that my heart, and all my members, being mortified from all carnal lusts, I may in all things obey thy blessed will.

O that we, who know thee now by faith, may, after this life, have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead!

In all our dangers and necessities, stretch forth thy right hand to save and defend us.

CHARITY.

O send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into my heart that most excellent gift of charity, that very bond of peace and of all virtue, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee!

Grant, I do most humbly beseech thee, O God, that as by thy special grace preventing me, thou dost put into my mind good desires, so by thy continual help, I may bring the same to good effect, through Jesus Christ.

O everlasting God, grant, that as thy holy Angels always do thee service in Heaven, so by thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth, through Jesus Christ.

Grant me grace, so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that I may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee.

I pray God my whole spirit, (my understanding, will, and conscience,) my soul, (my appetites, affections, and passions,) and my body, (the tabernacle of my soul,) be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May I take pleasure in abiding in thy presence, O God; in depending upon thee; in leaving myself entirely to thy disposal, as a continual sacrifice to thy will.

Give me a victory over all my sins and imperfections; increase in me the graces of faith, hope, and charity, of humility, meekness, patience, and resignation, and all other Christian virtues; for Jesus Christ's sake.

Preserve me, gracious God, from spiritual pride, from ascribing any thing I have done, or can do, to myself, and robbing thee of the glory of saving me from eternal ruin.

Take possession, O Jesus, of thy right in my soul, which thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and root out all self-righteousness, self-interest, and self-will;—that thou mayest be my righteousness, and all in me.

REPENTANCE.

Give me, O God, such a true sorrow for my sins, as shall enable me to embrace all the necessary means, how bitter soever, for rooting sin out of my soul.

HUMILITY.

1 Peter v. 5. *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

I have all the reason in the world to be humble. Without God I am nothing. Without his help and grace I can do nothing that is good. Without his word, I know nothing. Of myself, I deserve nothing but punishment. Of my own, I have nothing but faults, imperfections, and sins, an inclination to evil, an aversion to good, unruly senses, ungovernable passions, unreasonable affections.

1 Cor. i. 30. O Lord Jesus Christ, who art made unto us of God, our wisdom, by revealing him and his glorious perfections:—our righteousness, by satisfying the justice of God in our nature;—our sanctification, by procuring for us the Holy Ghost, and by restoring us, being sinners, to God's favour;—our redemption, by redeeming us from death eternal. O Jesus, for these

mighty favours, all love and glory be to thee, with the Father and the Holy Ghost for ever. *Amen.*

THE WAY OF A HAPPY LIFE.

Lay nothing too much to heart; desire nothing too eagerly; rejoice not excessively, nor grieve too much for disasters;—be not violently bent on any design; nor let any worldly cares hinder you from taking care of your soul; and remember, that it is necessary to be a Christian (that is, to govern one's-self by motives of Christianity) in the most common actions of civil life.

Col. iii. 17. *Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

He that would not fall into temptation, must have a presence of mind, a watchful eye over himself; he must have great things in view,—distinguish betwixt time and eternity; or else he will follow what passion, not what reason and religion suggest.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Whoever aspires after, (being so united to God, as to be one spirit with him,) must resolve to do all things with this sole view, to PLEASE God. This I purpose, this I forbear, this I undertake, this I do, this I suffer, in obedience to the will of God. This should be our express purpose, at all times, when we have time to make it; and should be often renewed, lest our own will come to be the rule of our actions. If I am careful to do this, I shall always have my end, whether I succeed, or be disappointed, being convinced it is God's will.

Rom. xiii. 14. *Put ye on the Lord Jesus, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

Grant, O Lord, that "I may keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means I should be a cast away." 1 Cor. ix. 27.

"Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another. Be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him re-

frain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace and ensue it." 1 Peter iii. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Give me, O Lord, a wise, a sober, a serious, a religious heart.

Preserve me from evil councils, and rash enterprises. O make thy way plain before my face.

Support me this day under all the difficulties I shall meet with.

I offer myself to thee, O God, this day, to do in me, and with me, as to thee seems most meet.

Vouchsafe me, gracious God, the spirit of adoption, whereby I may cry, *Abba*, *Father*, and apply to thee, through Jesus Christ, not as an angry judge, but as a merciful and loving father.

Remember, that the life of a man is only to be valued for its usefulness.

John xv. 12. *This is my commandment, That ye love one another.*

O thou who hast given me this command and pattern, give me a sincere desire of following, and grace and power to do it.

James v. 15. *And the prayer of faith shall save the sick; and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, he shall be absolved,* (i. e. upon his confession.)

O Lord of life and death! have mercy upon all those who are visited with sickness; sanctify this thy fatherly correction, that they may search their ways, and see whence this visitation cometh. Have mercy upon all that are appointed to die, and grant that they omit nothing that is necessary to make their peace with thee, and that they may be delivered from death eternal. And God grant that we may apply our hearts to that holy and heavenly wisdom, while we live here, which may, in the end, bring us to life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

NOON.

1 Tim. ii. 1. *I exhort, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.*

Acts xvii. 26. *For we are all of one blood.* And charity, that more excellent way, is a tender affection for the whole creation of God.

O God, almighty and merciful, let thy fatherly kindness be upon all whom thou hast made. Hear the prayers of all that call upon thee; open the eyes of them that never pray for themselves; pity the sighs of such as are in misery; deal mercifully with them that are in darkness; and increase the number of the graces of such as fear and serve thee daily. Preserve this land from the misfortunes of war;—this church from all dangerous errors; this people from forgetting thee, their Lord and Benefactor. Be gracious to all those countries that are made desolate by the sword, famine, pestilence, or persecution. Bless all persons and places to which thy providence has made me a debtor; all who have been instrumental to my good by their assistance, advice, or example; and make me in my turn, useful to others. Let none of those that desire my prayers want thy mercy; but defend, and comfort, and conduct them through to their lives' end.

"In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God, in Christ Jesus, concerning you."

Cause us, O God, to profit by all the visitations of thy grace and mercy.

"It becometh well the just to be thankful."

O Lord and Father, I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, which thou hast showed thy servant, neither can I render due thanks and praise for them; but, O Lord, accept of this my sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

For all the known, and for all the unobserved favours, deliverances, visitations, opportunities of doing good, chastisements, and graces of thy Holy Spirit, vouchsafed to me, I bless thy good providences; beseech-

ing thee to pardon my ingratitude, that I have passed so many days and years without observing, and without acknowledging, thy great goodness to thy unworthy servant.

For when I soberly consider my dependence upon thee, for my life, welfare, health of body, peace of mind, grace, comfort, and salvation, I ought to be very thankful.

Glory be to God, my Creator; glory be to Jesus, my Redeemer; glory be to the Holy Ghost, my Sanctifier, my Guide, my Comforter; all love, all glory, be to God most high. *Amen.*

Let us never ascribe any thing to ourselves, but all to the grace of God, and render to him all the glory of his works.

Preserve me, O God, from the insensibility of those who receive thy favours without being affected with them, and from the ingratitude of those who look upon them as a debt.

Psalm xcii. 1, 2. *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord; and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High! To show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning; and thy faithfulness every night.*

Many and great have been the favours and blessings which thou hast bestowed on these nations; for which, O Lord, in conjunction with those who praise thee for them, and in the stead of those who forget to praise thee, I bless and praise thy holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

Acts xvii. 28. *In thee we live, and move, and have our being.*

Grant that we may love thee with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.

Blessed be God, who dealeth with us with the tenderness of a father.

O that we may remember that our Father and our inheritance is in heaven.

I commit myself and all that belongs to me to thy fatherly care and love.

"Verily, whatever ye ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." (John xvi. 23.) This is the great support and comfort of sinners. Hear us, for thy Son's sake; for as sinners we have no right to ask any favour.

What manner of love is it, that we should be called the sons of God! 1 John iii. 1.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

"Thou art worthy, O Lord to receive honour, and power, and glory, for thou hast created all things."

"In this is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit."

May thy children have a great regard for every thing that belongs to thee.

May I never dishonour thee, O Heavenly Father, by word or deed.

May I glorify thee daily by a good life. Fill my heart with a great concern and zeal for thy glory.

"Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord."

"They that honour me, I will also honour."

How little have I done to promote thy glory! God be merciful unto me.

THY KINGDOM COME.

May all the kingdoms of the world obey thy laws, and submit to thy providence, and become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ.

Bless the pious endeavours of all those who strive to propagate the Gospel of thy kingdom.

Vouchsafe to reign in my heart; and let not Satan ever have dominion over me.

Fit us, O God, for the coming of thy kingdom. May I submit and rejoice to be governed by thee.

O that thy Holy Spirit may direct and rule my heart; subdue in me all pride and covetousness, hatred, malice, envy, lusts, and uncleanness, and whatever shall offend thee.

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

1 Thes. iv. 3. *This is the will of God, even our sanctification.*

Thou hast sent us into the world, not to do our own will, but thine.

O subject my will to thine.

May thy name be honoured by the good lives of Christians.

O that I may have respect unto all thy commands.

May thy will, revealed to us in thy holy word, be the rule of my will, of my desires, of my words, life and actions.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

John vi. 27. *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.*

Lord, give us evermore this bread. Give us the necessaries of life; but, above all, the bread that nourisheth to eternal life.

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US.

Luke vi. 37. *Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.*

Grant, O Heavenly Father, that I may close with this merciful condition of pardon.

Thou hast been all mercy to me, O God, grant I may be so to all others.

Blessed be the Lord, who hast put our salvation into our own hands. May thy grace, O Father, give me a heart ever ready to forgive.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

1 Cor. x. 12. *Let him that thinketh he standeth* (firm) *take heed lest he fall.*

Let not any confidence in ourselves provoke thee, O God, to leave us to ourselves.

2 Peter ii. 9. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.*

Thou, O Father, knowest my infirmities, and the power of my enemies; be not wanting to me in the hour of temptation.

Matt. xxvi. 41. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.*

Make me mindful of my weakness, that I may be more watchful and importunate for grace.

Fortify my soul against the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, for Jesus Christ's sake.

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

1 Peter v. 8. *Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*

Grant, O Heavenly Father, that this adversary may never find me off my guard, or from under thy protection.

In all my saving trials, give me grace and power to overcome, to thy glory.

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

To thee, to thee alone, and to thy Son, and Holy Spirit, be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

EVENING.

Psalm cxli. 2. *Let my prayer be set forth in thy sight as the incense; and let the lifting up of my hands be as an evening sacrifice.*

That it hath pleased God to add another day to the years of my life; that none of his judgments, to which for my sins I am liable, have fallen upon me; that, by his grace, he has kept me from all scandalous sins, and from the danger of an evil world; that he has given me occasions of doing good, and grace to make use of them; that he hath supplied me and my family with the necessaries of this life, and with means of attaining a better:—Accept, O God, of my unfeigned thanks for these, and for all thy mercies from day to day bestowed upon

me. Add this to all thy favours, I beseech thee, that I may never forget to be thankful.

Possess my heart with such a deep sense of my obligations to, and dependence upon thee, for life and health, and grace, and salvation, that religion may be my delight, as well as my duty.

But that I may serve thee with a quiet mind, forgive me the things whereof my conscience is afraid, and avert the judgments which I have justly deserved. Remember not the offences of my youth; and in mercy blot out those of my riper years. Pardon my sins of the day past, and of my life past, and grant that they may never rise up in judgment against me. *Amen.*

1 John ii. 12. *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins.*

O most powerful Advocate, I put my cause into thy hands; let thy blood and merits plead for me; and by thy mighty intercession, procure for me a full discharge of all my sins.

John v. 14. *Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

Lord, the frailty of man without thee cannot but fall. In all temptations, therefore, I beseech thee to succour me, that no sin may ever get the dominion over me.

Psalm xci. 1. *Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

May the Almighty God take me, my family, my relations, my friends, my benefactors, and my enemies, under his gracious protection. Give his holy angels charge concerning us; preserve us from the prince and powers of darkness, and from the dangers of the night; and keep us in perpetual peace and safety; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Hear me, O God, not according to my weak understanding, but according to the full importance of that Holy Prayer, which Jesus Christ has taught us, and which I presume to offer:—

Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.

OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

God will be glorified in the salvation of souls.

If the Almighty God were not my Father, I might expect vengeance instead of mercy.

May I show by my life that God is my Father!

This earth is not the inheritance of the children of God.

Blessed be God, who dealeth not with us with the authority of a lord over his servants, but with the tenderness of a father over his children.

THY KINGDOM COME.

I own thee for my King; do thou make and own me for thy faithful subject. Enlarge thy kingdom for the honour of thy great name. May I preserve thy kingdom within me, the government of thy Spirit. Bring me into subjection to thyself by thy grace.

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

That thou mayest have a church on earth as obedient to thy will as that is in heaven.

O Heavenly Father, subdue in me whatever is contrary to thy holy will. Grant that I may ever study to know thy will, that I may know how to please thee.

Thy will, O God, is the perfection of justice! let me never prescribe to thee what thou oughtest to give me. What thou willest, we may be sure, is best for us: we cannot be sure of what we will for ourselves. Hearken not to the corrupt desires of my heart, but to the voice of thy own mercy.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

Yes, my God, I will have recourse to thee daily: for on thee I depend daily for life, and breath, and grace, and all things.

Give me a true understanding of, and love for, thy word, the bread which nourisheth to eternal life.

For thou, O Lord, hath taught us not to seek that

bread which perisheth, but that which endureth to eternal life.

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US.

May I ever show mercy to men, that I may receive it from thee, my God.

Do I value my soul, and think this too hard a condition?

Thou art all mercy to me; grant that I may be all merciful to my brethren, for thy sake, O Father.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

For thou knowest our infirmities, and the power and malice of our enemies.

Thou knowest how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

Grant, O God, that I may never run into those temptations, which, in my prayers, I desire to avoid!

Vouchsafe me the gift of perseverance, on which my eternal happiness depends.

Lord, never permit my trials to be above my strength.

O Holy Spirit of Grace, be not wanting to me in the hour of temptation. And in all temptations, give us power to resist and overcome. Leave us not in the power of evil spirits to ruin us. Support us under all our saving trials and troubles.

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

Let thy fatherly compassion grant what the Son of thy love has encouraged us to pray for.

By thy almighty power, make good whatever is defective in me.

EXAMINATION.

Eccles. xviii. 20. *Before judgment examine thyself, and in the day of visitation thou shalt find mercy.*

Discover to me, O thou Searcher of hearts, whatever is amiss in me, whether in life or principle.

DEATH.

From sudden, from unprepared death, good Lord, deliver me, my family, and all that desire my prayers. May we never be surprised in sin; and may thy mercy supply whatever shall be wanting in our preparation for death.

For myself, with the submission of a penitent sinner, under the righteous sentence of death passed upon all mankind, I beg that I may so live, as that I may with joy resign my life, a sacrifice of obedience, in union with that of my Saviour's, to thee, O Father, trusting in thy mercy and goodness, and promises in Jesus Christ, at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. *Amen.*

Ephes. iv. 26. *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*

Lord, grant that I may lie down to sleep with the same charitable dispositions with which I desire and hope to die.

I beseech thee for all that are my enemies, not for judgment and vengeance, but for mercy, for the remission of their sins, and for their eternal happiness.

Psalm xiii. 3. *Lighten mine eyes, O Lord, that I sleep not in death.*

Deliver me from the terrors of the night, and from the pestilence that walketh in darkness.

Let my sleep be free from sin; preserve me, O Lord, from evil dreams, and evil demons.

Into thy hands I commend myself, my spirit, my soul and body, O Lord, thou God of truth.

Grant that I may remember thee upon my bed.

Psalm iv. 8. *I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest; for it is thou, Lord, only that makest me dwell in safety.*

May the Saviour and Guardian of my soul, take me under his protection this night and evermore.

SUNDAY MEDITATIONS.

PRAYERS, THANKSGIVINGS, &c

A DAILY FORM OF THANKSGIVING.

O Almighty God and most merciful Father, who, day after day, dost minister to sinful man infinite occasions of praising thee, accept of my unfeigned thanks for all the blessings I have, and every day receive, from thy good providence.

That of thine own mere goodness, and without any merit of mine, or of my forefathers, thou hast given me a being from honest and religious parents, and in such a part of the world where the Christian religion is purely taught, and thy sacraments duly administered.

That thou didst endue me with reason and perfect senses; and, to make these more comfortable to me, didst give me a sound and healthful body.

That thou gavest me an early knowledge of thee, my Creator and Redeemer.

That thou hast preserved me ever since my birth, and hath vouchsafed me health and liberty, and a competency of means to support me.

That thou hast redeemed me by thy Son, and given me a share in his merits; sanctified me by thy Holy Spirit, and hast heaped many favours upon me.

That thou hast given me honest friends, to admonish, to counsel, to encourage, and to support me, by their interest and advice.

That thou hast been my refuge in tribulation, and my defence in all adversities; delivering me from dangers, infamy, and troubles. For all known or unobserved deliverances, and for the guard thy holy angels keep over me, I praise thy good providence.

When I went astray, thou didst reduce me; when I was sad, thou didst comfort me; when I offended thee, thou didst forbear and gently correct me, and didst long expect my repentance; and when, for the greivousness

of my sins, I was ready to despair, thou didst keep me from utter ruin; thou hast delivered me from the snares and assaults of the devil; thou hast not only preserved my soul, but my body, from destruction, when sickness and infirmities took hold of me.

O Lord and Father, I cannot render due thanks and praise for all these mercies bestowed upon me; Such as I have, I give thee; and humbly beseech thee to accept of this my daily sacrifice of thanksgiving.

Pardon, O God, all my former ingratitude; and that I have passed so many days without observing, without admiring, without acknowledging and confessing, thy wonderful goodness to the most unworthy of thy servants.

For (now I soberly consider my dependence upon thee) as there is no hour of my life that I do not enjoy thy favours, and taste of thy goodness, so (if my frailty would permit) I would spend no part of my life without remembering thee.

Praise the Lord then, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name.

Glory be to thee, O Lord, my Creator. Glory be to thee, O Jesus, my Redeemer. Glory be to the Holy Ghost, my Sanctifier, my Guide, my Comforter.

All love, all glory, be to the high and undivided Trinity, whose works are inseparable, and whose dominion endureth world without end. *Amen.*

When I seriously consider, great God, my dependence upon thy providence, and that the favours and mercies I have received are infinitely more in number than the acknowledgments I have made, I am justly ashamed of my ingratitude, and afraid lest my unthankfulness should provoke thee to hinder the current of thy blessings from descending upon me.

Forgive, O merciful Father, my past negligencies, and give me grace for the time to come to observe and to value thy kindnesses, as becomes one who has received so much more than he deserves .

Preserve in my soul, O God, such a constant and clear sense of my obligations to thee, that upon the re-

ceipt of every favour, I may immediately turn my eyes to him from whom cometh my salvation. That thy manifold blessings may fix such lasting impressions upon my soul, that I may always praise thee faithfully here on earth, until it shall please thee, of thy unbounded mercy, to call me nearer the place of thy heavenly habitation, to praise my Lord and Deliverer to all eternity.

PROVIDENCE.

God has more ways of providing for us, of helping us, than we can possibly imagine; it is infidelity to desire to confine him to our ways and methods.

Matt. viii. 25. *Lord, save us, we perish.*

Nothing can better express our own inability, and our whole dependence upon God. Two sure conditions of obtaining help.

Since thy mercy, O God, is ever ready to help all that call upon thee in time of distress, let thy goodness answer my wants.

Keep me under the protection of thy good providence, and make me to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy name, through Jesus Christ.

The more destitute we are of human aid, the more ought we to trust to that providence which God is pleased to exert in extreme necessity.

O God, give me grace never to condemn thy providence; let me adore the wisdom of thy conduct, the holiness of thy ways, and the power of thy grace.

How many sins should we commit, if God did not vouchsafe to oppose our corrupt will! Blessed be his holy name, for not leaving me to my own choices.

Psalm xc. 12. *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

BIRTH-DAY.

Blessed be God for my creation and birth; for giving me a being from honest parents, fearing God, and in a Christian and Protestant country; for giving me perfect members and senses, a sound reason and a healthful

constitution; for the means of grace, the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and for the hopes of glory; for all the known or unobserved favours, providences, and deliverances, by which my life has hitherto been preserved; most humbly beseeching thee, my God and Father, to pardon my neglect or abuse of any of thy favours, and that I have so very much forgotten thee, in whom I live, and move, and have my being.

Good Lord, forgive me the great waste of my precious time, the many days and years of health, and the many opportunities of doing good which I have lost; and give me grace, that, for the time to come, I may be truly wise; that I may consider my latter end, and work out my salvation with fear and trembling, ever remembering, "that the night cometh when no man can work;" and that the day of my death may be better to me than the day of my birth.

O, gracious God, grant that before thou takest from me that breath which thou gavest me, I may truly repent of the errors of my life past; that my sins may be forgiven, and my pardon sealed in heaven; so that I may have a place of rest in Paradise with thy faithful servants, till the general resurrection; when the good Lord vouchsafe me a better and an everlasting life, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

Blessed be God, who has brought me safe to the beginning of another year.

Blessed be God, that I am of the number of those who have time and space for repentance yet given them.

My God, make me truly sensible of this mercy, and give me grace to consider often how short and how uncertain my time is; that there is one year more of a short life passed over my head; and that I am so much nearer eternity; that I may in good earnest think of another life, and be so prepared for it, as that death may not overtake me unawares.

Lord, pardon all my misspent time, and make me more diligent and careful to redeem it for the time to

come, that when I come to the end of my days, I may look back with comfort on the days that are past.

Grant that I may begin this new year with new resolutions of serving thee more faithfully; and if, through infirmity or negligence, I forget these good purposes, the good Lord awaken in me a sense of my danger.

My heart is in thy hands, O God, as well as my time; O make me wise unto salvation; that I may consider in this my day the things that belong unto my peace; and that I may pass this, and all the years I have yet to live, in the comfortable hope of a blessed eternity, for the Lord Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

LORD'S DAY.

Amos viii. 5. *When will the Sabbath be gone, that we may sell wheat?*

Deliver us, gracious God, from this sin of covetousness, from being weary of thy Sabbaths, which are ordained to preserve in our hearts the knowledge of thee and thy Son Jesus Christ.

O that we may desire, and rejoice in, the return of this day, and serve thee faithfully on it; and that we may enjoy an everlasting Sabbath with thy saints, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

O that I may be glad when they say unto me, Come, let us go to the house of God!

PRAYERS FOR ALL MANKIND.

1 Tim. ii. 1. *I exhort, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.*

O God, almighty and merciful, let thy fatherly kindness be upon all that thou hast made.

Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, and grant that none may deprive themselves of that happiness which Jesus Christ has purchased by his death.

Bless the pious endeavours of all those that strive to propagate the Gospel of Christ; and may its saving truths be received in all the world.

Preserve thy Church, in the midst of the dangers that surround it: purge it from all corruptions, and heal its divisions, that all Christian people may unite and love as becomes the disciples of Christ.

Grant that all Bishops and Pastors may be careful to observe the sacred rights committed to their trust:

That godly discipline may be restored and countenanced:

That Christians may not content themselves with bare shadows of religion and piety, but endeavour after that holiness without which no man can see the Lord:

That such as are in authority may govern with truth and justice; and that those whose duty it is to obey, may do it for conscience' sake.

Let all that sincerely seek the truth, be led into it by thy Holy Spirit; and to all such as are destitute of necessary instruction, vouchsafe a greater measure of thy grace.

Support and comfort all that labour under trials and afflictions, all that suffer wrongfully; and by thy mighty grace succour all those that are tempted.

Give unto all sinners a true sense of their unhappy state, and grace and strength to break their bonds.

Visit with thy fatherly comforts all such as are now in their last sickness, that they may omit nothing that is necessary to make their peace with thee.

Be gracious to all those countries that are made desolate by the sword, famine, pestilence, or persecution. And sanctify the miseries of this life, to the everlasting benefit of all that suffer.

Preserve this land from the miseries of war; this Church from persecution, and from all wild and dangerous errors; and this people from forgetting thee, their Lord and Benefactor.

Avert the judgments which we have justly deserved; and mercifully prevent the ruin that threatens us; and grant that we may be ever prepared for what thy providence shall bring forth.

Bless all persons and places to which thy providence has made me a debtor; all who have been instrumental

to my good, by their assistance, advice, or example; and make me, in my turn, useful to others.

Let none of those who cannot pray for themselves, and desire my prayers, want thy mercy; but defend, and comfort, and conduct them through this dangerous world, that we may meet in Paradise, to praise our God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Enlighten the minds, and pardon the sin, of all that err through simplicity.

Let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but guide thou the just.

Relieve and comfort all that are troubled in mind or conscience; all that are in danger of falling into despair; all that are in any dangerous error; all that are in prison, in slavery, or under persecution for a righteous cause; all that are in any distress whatever; that all may improve under their sufferings.

Have mercy upon and reclaim all that are engaged in sinful courses, in youthful lusts, in unchristian quarrels, and in unrighteous law-suits.

Direct all that are in doubt, all that seek the truth.

O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all, have mercy upon all whom thou hast made and redeemed. *Amen.*

MONDAY MEDITATIONS.

RESIGNATION.

Luke xxii. 42. *Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.*

O God, who takest delight in helping the afflicted, help a soul too often distressed with an inward rebellion against thy just appointments.

Who am I, that I should make exceptions against the will of God, infinitely *great*, *wise*, and *good?*

I know not the things that are for my own good.

My most earnest desires, if granted, may prove my ruin.

The things I complain of and fear, may be the effects of the greatest mercy.

The disappointments I meet with may be absolutely necessary for my eternal welfare.

I do, therefore, protest against the sin and madness of desiring to have *my will* done, and not the *will of God.*

Grant, gracious Father, that I may never dispute the reasonableness of thy will, but ever close with it, as the best that can happen.

Prepare me always for what thy providence shall bring forth.

Let me never murmur, be dejected, or impatient, under any of the troubles of this life; but ever find rest and comfort in *this*, THIS IS THE WILL OF MY FATHER, AND OF MY GOD: grant this for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

To the glory of God, and justification of his infinite goodness, I do here acknowledge, that in all the dispen sations of providence which have befallen me to this day, however uneasy to flesh and blood, I have, notwithstanding, experienced the kindness of a father for his child; and am convinced, that it would have been much worse for me had I my own choices.

O God, grant that for the time to come, I may yield a cheerful obedience to all thy appointments. *Amen.*

Corrupt nature cannot comprehend that afflictions are the effects of the divine love. It must be thy grace, O Lover of Souls, which must work in me this conviction, which I beseech thee to vouchsafe to me.

Never set a greater value upon this world than it deserves.

If a man is not eager or positive in his desires, he will more readily embrace the appointments of Providence.

If we place our hopes, or our dependence, upon the power, the wisdom, the counsel, or the *interest* we have in man, and not in God only, we shall surely be disappointed.

Job. xiii. 15. *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*

O my crucified King and Saviour, let my submission to whatever afflictions shall befall me, for thy sake, or by thy appointment, be to me a pledge and an assurance of my fidelity to thee, and conformity to thy sufferings.

It is a favour to be punished and to suffer in this life, when a man makes a good use of his sufferings. But to suffer by constraint, is to suffer without comfort and without benefit.

Our union and conformity with the will of God ought to be instead of all consolation.

Grant, O God, that I may always accept of the punishment of my sins with resignation to thy good pleasure.

Remember me, O Lord, in the day of trouble: keep me from all excess of fear, concern, and sadness.

Grant me an humble and resigned heart, that with perfect content I may ever acquiesce in all the methods of thy grace, that I may never frustrate the designs of thy mercy, by unreasonable fears, by sloth, or self-love. *Amen.*

Think often of God, and of his attributes, his mercy, compassion, fidelity, fatherly care, goodness, protection. Dwell on these thoughts till they produce such a well-grounded confidence as will support us under all difficulties, and assure us that he cannot possibly forsake those that depend on him.

When God deprives us of any thing that is most dear to us,—health, ease, conveniences of life, friends, wife, children, &c. we should immediately say, This is God's will; I am by him commanded to part with so much; let me not, therefore, murmur or be dejected, for then it would appear that I did love that thing more than God's will.

When God thus visits us, let us immediately look inwards; and, lest our sins should be the occasion, let us take care that we seriously repent, and endeavour to make our peace with God; and then he will either deliver or support us, and will convince us that we suffer

in justice for our faults; or for our trial, and to humble us; or for God's glory, and to sanctify us.

1 Peter v. 5. *Be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.*

Give me grace, O God, to study, to love, to adore, and to imitate that humility, which thy blessed Son hath taught us both by his word and by his most holy example.

BUSINESS

Ephes. v. 17. *Understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

To engage in any business of importance without knowing this, and taking counsel of God, may cost us dear.

Isa. xxx. 1. *Wo to them that take counsel, but not of me, saith the Lord.*

But then, let a man take heed, that when he goes to inquire of the Lord, he does not set up idols in his own heart, lest God answer him according to his idols.

We are to pray for the direction of God's Spirit, upon all great occasions: especially, we are humbly to depend on his direction, and cheerfully to expect it, which he will manifest, either by some plain event of his providence, or by suggesting such reasons as ought to determine the will to a wise choice.

But to follow the inclinations of the will without reason, only because we find ourselves strongly inclined to this or that, is a very dangerous way, and may engage us in very dangerous practices.

MASTER.—SERVANT.

Death, in a very little time, may make the master and the servant equal. Let us anticipate this equality, by treating our servants with compassion; having respect to Christ, in the person of our servant,—to Christ who took upon him the form of a servant for our sakes.

TUESDAY MEDITATIONS.

TROUBLE, PERSECUTION, AFFLICTIONS, ETC.

Psalm l. 15. *Call upon me in the time of trouble; so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise me.*

O God, who seest all our weaknesses, and the troubles we labour under, have regard unto the prayers of thy servant, who stands in need of thy comfort, thy direction, and thy help.

Grant that I may suffer like a Christian, and not grieve like an unbeliever;—that I may receive troubles as a punishment due to my past offences,—as an exercise of my faith, and patience, and humility,—and as a trial of my obedience;—and that I may improve all my afflictions to the good of my soul, and thy glory.

Thou alone knowest what is best for us: Let me never dispute thy wisdom or thy goodness.

Direct my reason, subdue my passions, put a stop to my roving thoughts and fears, and let me have the comfort of thy promise, and of thy protection, both now and ever, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

Heb. xii. 7. *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

Micah vii. 9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.*

If I am despised or slighted, I ought to consider it as a favour, since this is a mark of God's children; and, therefore, I ought to thank him for it, and not be angry with those whom he makes his instruments to subdue and mortify my pride.

1 Peter iv. 13. *Rejoice inasmuch as ye are made partakers of the sufferings of Christ; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with*

exceeding joy;—Because your reward will be proportionable to your sufferings.

Matt. v. 11, 12. *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

The mystery of the cross is to be learned under the cross.

Matt. x. 28, 29. *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. The very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

1 Peter v. 6, 7. *Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God,* [under great afflictions which he suffers to befall you] *that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.*

Matt. vi. 10. *Thy will be done.*

It is just, great God, it should be so; for who should govern the world but he that made it? And yet we, poor creatures, repine when any thing crosses our hopes or designs. What strange unthoughtfulness! what presumption is this? And it is thy great mercy that any of us are sensible of this folly, and become willing to be governed by thee.

With all my heart and soul, O God, I thank thee, that in all the changes and chances of this mortal life, I can look up to thee, and cheerfully resign my will to thine.

It is the desire of my soul, and my humble petition, that I may always be ready and willing to submit to thy providence, that thou mayest order what thou judgest to be most convenient for me.

I have trusted thee, O Father, with myself; my soul is in thy hands, which I verily believe thou wilt preserve

to eternal happiness; my body, and all that belongs to it, are of much less value. I do, therefore, with as great security and satisfaction, trust all I have to thee, hoping thou wilt preserve me from all things hurtful, and lead me to all things profitable to my salvation.

I will love thee, O God; being satisfied that all things, however strange and irksome they appear, shall work together for good to those that do so.

I know in whom I have believed; I have a Saviour at thy right hand, full of kindness, full of care, full of power; he has prayed for me, that this faith fail me not; and by this faith I am persuaded, that neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor death which I may fear, nor life which I may hope for, nor things present which I feel, nor things to come which I may apprehend, shall ever prevail so far over me, as to make me not to resign my will entirely to thee.

In an humble, quiet, and dutiful submission, let me faithfully run the race that is set before me, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, despised the shame, endured the cross, and is now seated at the right hand of God; to whom I most humbly beseech thee to bring me in thy good time; and for whatever shall fall out in the meanwhile, *Thy will be done. Amen.*

LOOK UNTO JESUS.

He was despised and rejected of men;—his life was sought for by Herod;—he was tempted by Satan;—hated by the world which he came to save;—set at naught by his own people;—called a deceiver, and a dealer with the devil;—was driven from place to place, and had not where to lay his head;—betrayed by one disciple, and forsaken by all the rest; falsely accused, spit upon, and scourged; set at naught by Herod and his men of war; given up by Pilate to the will of his enemies; and a murderer preferred before him;—was condemned to a most cruel and shameful death;—crucified between two thieves;—reviled in the midst of his

torments;—had gall and vinegar given him to drink;—suffered a most bitter death, submitting with patience to the will of his Father.

O Jesus, who now sittest at the right hand of God, to succour all who suffer in a righteous way, be thou my advocate for grace; that, in all my sufferings, I may follow thy example, and run with patience the race that is set before me. *Amen.*

Take all things that befall you as coming from God's providence, for your particular profit. And though they are evil in themselves, yet as he permits, or does not think fit to hinder them, they may be referred to him.

God no sooner discovers in your heart an ardent desire of well-doing, and of submitting to his will, but he prepares for you occasions of trying your virtue; and, therefore, confident of his love, receive cheerfully a medicine prepared by a physician that cannot be mistaken, and cannot give you any thing but what will be for your good.—See Eccles. ii.

Lord, prepare my heart, that no afflictions may ever so surprise as to overbear me.

Dispose me at all times to a readiness to suffer what thy providence shall order or permit.

It is the same cup which Jesus Christ drank of; it is he sends it. He sees it absolutely necessary that I must be first partaker of his sufferings, and then of his glory.

Matt. x. 22. *And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that shall endure to the end shall be saved.*

It is indeed grievous to nature to be thus treated; but when it is for thy name's sake, O Jesus, and for the sake of thy truth, and for being true to thee; how lovely is this hatred! and how advantageous when salvation is the reward!

Matt. x. 24. *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.*

He who keeps this saying in his heart will never complain of what he suffers, nor seek for any other way to save himself but by humiliation and the cross.

SUFFERING.

O Lord, grant that whenever I suffer, it may be for being faithful to thee, and without drawing it unseasonably upon myself.

We are in God's hands; we often take ourselves out of his hands, by trusting to the help and protection of men, more than that of God.

God can render none miserable but those whom he finds sinners. Let us apply this to ourselves when in affliction, but not unto others, or to their personal faults.

Rev. iii. 19. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent.*

Blessed be God, who vouchsafes, by salutary chastisements, to awaken us when we fall asleep through sloth and lukewarmness.

Grant, O God, that I may never murmur at thy appointments, nor be exasperated at the ministers of thy providence.

In thee, O Jesus, we find matter of consolation in every affliction that can possibly befall us.

All visitations are from God. He is not delighted with the miseries of his poor creatures; afflictions are therefore designed for our good. He will either show us the reason of his visitation, or make us reap the fruits of it.

People that may be well disposed, may yet live under the power of some evil custom, which is displeasing to God; a man may have been guilty of some great sin which he has yet never truly repented of, or been truly humble for. This was the case of the sons of Jacob; they had attempted the life of, and afterwards sold their brother, and endangered the life of their aged father; under which guilt they passed their life well enough for many years, till God visited them; and then they thought of their sins, confessed, and repented.

God, by afflictions, often fits us for greater degrees of grace, which he is going to bestow.

Though I suffer, yet I am well, because I am what God would have me to be.

Lord, do not permit my trials to be above my strength; and do thou vouchsafe to be my strength and comfort in the time of trial.

Give me grace to take in good part whatever shall befall me, and let my heart acknowledge it to be the Lord's doing, and to come from thy providence, and not by chance.

AFFLICTIONS.

God makes use of afflictions—Sometimes by way of prevention; "lest I should be exalted," said St. Paul, (2 Cor. xii. &c.)—To reform them; "before I was afflicted, I went astray," (Ps. cxix.)—To perfect them; patience, courage, submission to the will of God, are graces not so much as understood by people who meet with no adversities; "we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God," (Acts xiv. 22.)—To prove men, and show them for examples; if a man had no enemies, how could he show his charity in forgiving them?

John xi. 5. Afflictions are no marks of God's displeasure. "Jesus loved Mary and Lazarus," yet they were both afflicted.

Punishment is due to sin. We must be punished here or hereafter; it is the cause of all afflictions, and designed by our gracious God to bring us to repentance.

Prosperity is a most dangerous state; we fancy it is owing to our merit, and it is followed with pride, neglect of duty, fearlessness.

It is happy for us when God counts us worthy to suffer for his name's sake.

Afflictions, undergone with resignation, are the great test of our love of God; when we love him, then he chastens us. May God sanctify all our afflictions to us all.

May I receive every thing from thy hand with patience and with joy.

Remember me, O God, in the day of trouble. Secure me, by thy grace, from all excess of fear, concern, and sadness.

Let the afflictions I meet with be in some measure serviceable towards the appeasing of thy wrath. Let them prove the happy occasion of forwarding my conversion and salvation.

TEMPTATION.

We are exposed to temptation all our days. Men are never more dangerously tempted, than when they think themselves secure from temptation. This is a proof of the power the devil has over them.

We tempt God when we expose ourselves unnecessarily to dangers, through a false confidence of his assistance.

DESPAIR. HOPE.

Grant, O God, that amidst all the discouragements, difficulties, dangers, distress, and darkness of this mortal life, I may depend upon thy mercy, and on this build my hopes, as on a sure foundation.

Let thine infinite mercy in Christ Jesus deliver me from despair, both now and at the hour of death.

RESIGNATION.

Grant that I may receive the punishment of my sins with patience and resignation.

INJURIES. PERSECUTION.

Give me, O God, a heart to consider, that man could have no power against me unless it were given from above.

ENEMIES.

A Christian should not discover that he has enemies in any other way, than by doing more good to them than to others. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." He will, therefore, be careful not to lose such occasions.

O Jesus! whose charity all the malice of thy bitterest enemies could not overcome, shed abroad in my heart

that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace, and of all virtues.

Our enemies are our benefactors, procuring for us a new right to heaven.

I pray God convert all those who hate us without cause.

I beseech thee for my enemies, not for vengeance, but for mercy; that thou wouldst change their hearts by thy grace, or restrain their malice by thy power.

IN TIME OF WAR.

O Sovereign Lord! who for our sins art justly displeased, I prostrate myself before thee, confessing my own sin, and the sin of this people; acknowledging the justice of any scourge which thou shalt think fit to bring upon us; and trembling to think how much I may have contributed towards it.

Thou hast already spoken to us both by thy judgments and mercies, both by the scarcity and plenty of bread, and we have not regarded it. Thou hast taken away the lives of many, very many, in their very sins, by which numerous widows, and fatherless children, have been left miserable.

The sins of *whoredom* and *drunkenness;* of *swearing*, *lying*, and *perjury;* of *litigiousness*, *injustice*, and *defrauding the public*, are made light of.

The sins of *impiety*, of *profaneness*, of *despising the means of grace and salvation*, are too common amongst us.

What shall we say, to prevail with God to avert the judgments which these sins deserve?

God be merciful unto us, and put a stop to this torrent of wickedness,—put thy fear into all our hearts, that we may return to thee; that we may repent, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance; and that iniquity may not be our ruin.

May the dread of thy now threatened judgments deter us from evil;—may thy goodness and patience lead us to repentance,—weaken the power of Satan,—take from

among us the spirit of slumber, of ignorance, and inconsideration.

Let every one of us see and feel the plague of his own heart, and say, What have I done to bring these evils upon us? So that bringing forth fruits answerable to amendment of life, we may escape thy judgments now hanging over us; and, above all, thy judgments against sinners in the world to come. And this I beg for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

JUDGMENT DAY.

Grant, O Lord, that I may be of the number of those that shall find mercy at that day.

ZACCHEUS.

The good Lord grant that I may give a proof of the sincerity of my conversion by a change of life.

WEDNESDAY MEDITATIONS.

COVETOUSNESS. FASTING. DIFFICULTIES. SELF-DENIAL.

Matt. iv. 9, 10. *All these things will I give thee.—Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

Great and glorious God, who alone art worthy of our love and service, cure me of, and preserve me from the sin and vanity of admiring this world.

Give me grace to renounce all covetous desires, all love of riches and pleasures;—to desire only what is necessary, and to be content with what thou, O Lord, thinkest so:

Not to be troubled at the loss or want of any thing besides thy favour:

That no business, no pleasures, may divert me from the thoughts of the world to come:

That I may cheerfully part with all these things, when thou requirest it of me;

And that I may be ever prepared to do so, dispose me to a temperance in all things, and to lay up my treasure in heaven, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

Luke vi. 24. *Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation.*

A man must have but little faith, who can read these words, and yet love riches, and the pleasures they afford.

Lord grant that I may resist every temptation to the love of creatures; lest they steal my heart from thee, my God, whom I desire to love with all my soul.

I know that I must, in a great measure, renounce all other objects of my affection, in order to love thee with all my heart. Lord, give me grace and strength to put this in practice.

1 John ii. 15. *Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Grant, O God, that I may never hope to reconcile two things so inconsistent as the love of thee and the world.

Matt. v. 3. *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

To be poor in spirit, is to be disengaged from wealth, to look upon it as a burden, or as a trust.

1 Tim. vi. 8. *Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.*

And yet even the Christian world is not content without superfluities and excess. These disorders are not less criminal, because so common.

Give me, O God, the eyes of faith, that I may see the world just as it is:—the vanity of its promises, the folly of its pleasures, the unprofitableness of its rewards, the multitude of its snares, and the dangers of its temptations.

FASTING.

Jesus Christ spared not his innocent flesh, but fasted; the sinner cherisheth his continually, refusing it nothing.

Fasting is in some sense a punishment and expiation for past sins, a remedy for present, and a preservative against future temptations.

Psalm cii. 4. *My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.*

The humble and afflicted soul is not much concerned to please the appetite.

Luke vi. 25. *Wo unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger;* that is, ye whose daily meals are feasts, who make profession of a life of sensuality, who know not what it is to fast; wo to such Christians.

If we judge ourselves with severity, we shall be judged with mercy.

IN TIME OF TROUBLE.

Psalm xxxix. 11. *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.*

O merciful God, who in thy wise providence dost so order even natural events, that they serve both for the good of the universe, and for the conviction of particular sinners, so that men shall have reason to acknowledge thy glorious attributes;—I do, with great sorrow of heart, but with all submission to thy good pleasure, confess thy mercy as well as justice to me in the judgments, afflictions, sorrows, of this day.

I acknowledge thy voice, O merciful God; I ac knowledge my own transgressions, which have provoked thee to speak to me after this manner, and at this very time.

O Lord, give me true repentance for all the errors of my life, and particularly for that which was in all probability the occasion of this affliction.

Blessed be God, that my punishment was not as great as my crime.

Blessed be God, that he has given me time to repent of the sin that provoked him to deal with me after this manner.

Blessed be God, that when he spake to me once, yea twice, that I regarded it at last.

Good God of mercy, give me grace that I may not provoke thee any more to repeat this word to me, but that I may faithfully perform those vows which are upon me. This I cannot do without thy gracious assistance which I most humbly beseech thee to vouchsafe me, for Jesus Christ's sake, who by his merits has purchased this grace for all that faithfully ask it of thee; for his sake, O merciful God, grant me this grace. *Amen.*

I do in all humility accept of the punishment of mine iniquities.

I will hold my peace, and not open my mouth, because it is thy doing and my deservings.

I know, O Lord, that it is good for me to be in trouble, or thou wouldest not suffer it so to be.

Let thy merciful kindness be my comfort, according to thy promise to all that love and serve thee.

DIFFICULTIES.

We are to pray for the particular direction of God's Holy Spirit upon all great occasions;—we are humbly to depend upon, and cheerfully to expect it.

IN A LAW-SUIT.

Convince me, O God, if I am under any mistake in this affair.

Direct, assist, and support me under all the difficulties I shall meet with.

Put a happy end, in thy good time, to this troublesome controversy.

Dispose the hearts of those with whom we have to do to peace and justice.

Give me grace to rest satisfied with whatever shall be the issue, believing assuredly, that God can make good any loss I may sustain, or sanctify it to my eternal welfare.

Lord, in this, and in all other things I undertake, thy will be done, and not mine.

O manifest thy will to me, preserve me from evil counsels, and from rash enterprises.

FAITH.

Grant, O God, that I may with humility receive, and with perseverance hold fast, all those truths which thou hast revealed.

I thank thee, O God, for thy Holy Word, and for that thou hast not left us, in the affair of eternity, to the uncertainty of our own reason and judgment.

Defend me against all delusions of error, the snares of wit and learning, the railleries of profane men, and from deserting the truth.

Grant, O God, that neither education, interest, prejudice, or passion, may ever hinder me from discerning the truth.

Open the eyes of all that are in error; heal the wounds of the divided Church; that we may be one fold under one Shepherd. *Amen.*

John xvi. 13. *The Holy Spirit shall guide you into all truth.*

O Holy Spirit, make me to understand, embrace, and love the truths of the Gospel.

Give, O God, thy blessing unto thy word, that it may become effectual to my conversion and salvation, and to the salvation of all that read and hear it.

Give me grace to read thy Holy Word with reverence and respect, becoming the gracious manifestation of thy will to men; submitting my understanding and will to thine.

Let thy gracious promises, O God, contained in thy word, quicken my obedience. Let thy dreadful threatenings and judgments upon sinners frighten me from sin, and oblige me to a speedy repentance, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Cause me, O God, to believe thy word, to obey thy commands, to fear thy judgments, and to hope in, and depend upon, thy gracious promises contained in thy Holy Word, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Give me a full persuasion of those great truths which thou hast revealed in thy Holy Word.

The Gospel will not be a means of salvation to him who reads or hears it only, but to him who reads, loves, remembers, and practices it by a lively faith.

Cause me, O God, rightly to understand, and constantly to walk in the way of thy commandments.

Grant us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting, for Jesus Christ's sake.

From hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word, good Lord deliver us.

Give us grace to hear meekly thy word, to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of thy Spirit, to amend our lives according to thy Holy Word. *Amen.*

SELF-DENIAL.

Ecclus. xix. 5. *He that resisteth pleasures crowneth his life.*

Vouchsafe me gracious God, the graces of mortification and self-denial, that my affections and flesh being subdued unto the Spirit, and my heart and all my members being mortified from all carnal and worldly lusts, I may ever obey thy blessed will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

All mankind being under sentence of death, certainly to be executed, and at an hour we know not of; a state of repentance and self-denial, of being dead and crucified to the world, is certainly the most suitable, the most becoming temper that we can be found in, when that sentence comes to be executed; that is, when we come to die:—Especially when we consider, that this short and uncertain time allowed us betwixt the sentence and execution, will determine our condition for eternity.

If this be the case of fallen man, as most certainly it is, then thoughtless unremitting pleasure is the greatest indecency;—a fondness for the world, the greatest folly;—and self-indulgence, downright madness.

And, consequently, the contrary to these, namely, a constant seriousness of temper, an universal care and

exactness of life, an indifference for the world, self-denial, sobriety, and watchfulness, must be our greatest wisdom.

And this discovers to us the reason and the necessity of all the duties of Christianity; and of God's dealings with fallen man in this state of trial.

For instance:—Jesus Christ commands us to *deny ourselves*, and to take up our cross daily, not because he can command what he pleases (for he is infinite goodness, and can command nothing but what is good for his creatures) but because the corruption of our nature requires that we should be forbidden every thing which would increase our disorder.

And because this disorder has spread itself through all the powers of our souls and bodies, and inclines us to evil continually, he requires that our self-denial should reach as far as our corruption.

He commands us, therefore, to deny our own wisdom, because we are really blind as to what concerns our own true good, and should infallibly ruin ourselves, if left to our own choices.

He commands us to deny our *appetites*, because intemperance would ruin us.

He forbids us to give way to our *passions*, because a thousand evils will follow if we should do so.

He obliges us to keep a very strict watch over our hearts, because from thence proceed hypocrisy, covetousness, malice, and many other evils.

We are forbid to set our hearts upon the world, and every thing in it, because our eternal happiness depends upon our loving God with all our heart and soul.

We are obliged to love our neighbour, and our very enemies; and are forbid to hate, to contend with, to hurt, to go to law with him, because this would exasperate our minds, and grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by which we are sanctified; being against that charity which God delights in.

We are forbid all repining when God afflicts us, because, as sinners, suffering is due to us. And because our bodies have a very great influence over our souls, we are commanded to fast, and to be stricty temperate

at all times, and to deny ourselves the love of sensual pleasures and self-indulgence.

We are commanded to deny all the ways of folly, vanity, and false satisfactions, that we may be able to take satisfaction and pleasure in the ways of God.

In short:—In whatever instances we are commanded to deny ourselves, it is because it is absolutely necessary, either to cure our corruption, or to qualify us for the grace of God, or to hinder us from grieving God's Holy Spirit, and forcing him to forsake us.

The more we deny ourselves, the freer we shall be from sin, and the more dear to God.

God appoints us to sufferings, that we may keep close to him, and that we may value the sufferings, of his Son, which we should have but a low notion of, did not our own experience teach us what it is to suffer.

They that deny themselves, will be sure to find their strength increased, their affection raised, and their inward peace continually advanced.

1. Tim. vi. 8. *Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.*

Let us not imagine that excess, luxury, and superfluity, and the love of pleasures, are less criminal, because they are so common.

TAKE UP THE CROSS.

This is designed as a peculiar favour to Christians, as indeed are all Christ's commands. Miseries are the unavoidable portion of fallen man. All the difference is, Christians suffering in obedience to the will of God, it makes them easy; unbelievers suffer the same things, but with an uneasy will and mind.

To follow our own will, our passions, and our sense, is that which makes us miserable. It is for this reason, and that we may have a remedy for all our evils, that Jesus Christ obliges us to submit our will, our passions, &c. to God.

The good Christian is not one who has no inclination to sin, (for we have all the seed of sin in us) but who

being sensible of such inclinations, denieth them continually, and suffers them not to grow into evil actions.

Every day deny yourself some satisfaction;—your *eyes*, objects of mere curiosity;—your *tongue*, every thing that may feed vanity, or vent enmity;—the *palate*, dainties;—the *ears*, flattery, and whatever corrupts the heart;—the *body*, ease and luxury; bearing all the inconveniences of life, (for the love of God) cold, hunger, restless nights, ill health, unwelcome news, the faults of servants, contempt, ingratitude of friends, malice of enemies, calumnies, our own failings, lowness of spirits, the struggle in overcoming our corruptions;—bearing all these with patience and resignation to the will of God, "Do all this as unto God, with the greatest privacy."

All ways are indifferent to one who has heaven in his eye, as a traveller does not choose the pleasantest, but the shortest and safest way to his journey's end; and that is, the way of the cross, which Jesus Christ made choice of, and sanctified it to all his followers.

Matt. viii. 20. *The Son of Man has not where to lay his head.*

This should fill us with confusion, whenever we are overmuch concerned for the conveniencies of life.

Our affections being very strongly inclined to sensible good, for the sake of which we are often tempted to evil, and fall into great disorders, we should resolve to sacrifice our will to reason, and reason to the will of God.

God does not require it of us, that we should not feel any uneasiness under the cross, but that we should strive to overcome it by his grace.

VIRTUES OF A HOLY LIFE.

Fervency in devotion;—frequency in prayer;—aspiring after the love of God continually;—striving to get above the world and the body; loving silence and solitude, as far as one's condition will permit; humble and affable to all; patient in suffering affronts and contradictions;—glad of occasions of doing good even to ene-

mies ;—doing the will of God, and promoting his honour, to the utmost of one's power ;—resolving never to offend him willingly, for any temporal *pleasure*, *profit*, or *loss :* These are virtues highly pleasing to God.

Self-denial does not consist in fasting and other mortifications only, but in an *indifference for the world*, its *profits*, *pleasures*, *honours*, and its other idols.

It is necessary that we deny ourselves in little and indifferent things, when reason and conscience, which is the voice of God, suggests it to us, as ever we hope to get the rule over our own will.

Say not, it is a trifle, and not fit to make a sacrifice of to God. He that will not sacrifice a little affection will hardly offer a greater. It is not the thing, but the reason and manner of doing it, namely, for God's sake, and that I may accustom myself to obey his voice, that God regards, and rewards with greater degrees of grace.

The greater your self-denial, the firmer your faith, and more acceptable to God. The sincere devotion of the rich, the alms of the poor, the humility of the great, the faith of such whose condition is desperate, the contemning the world when one can command it at pleasure, continuing instant in prayer, even when we want the consolation we expected : These and such like instances of self-denial, God will greatly reward.

They who imagine that self-denial intrenches upon our liberty, do not know that it is this only that can make us free indeed, giving us the victory over ourselves, setting us free from the bondage of our corruption, enabling us to bear afflictions, which will come one time or other) to foresee them without amazement, enlightening the mind, sanctifying the will and making us to slight those baubles which others so eagerly contend for.

Mortification consists in such a sparing use of the creatures as may deaden our love for them, and make us more indifferent in the enjoyment of them. This lessens the weight of concupiscence, which carries us to evil, and so makes the grace of God more effectual to turn the balance of the will.*

* Norris's Christian Prudence, p. 300

Carnal man cannot comprehend that God loves those whom he permits to suffer; but faith teaches us that the cross is the gift of his love, the foundation of our hope, the mark of his children, and the title of an inheritance in heaven. But unless God sanctify it by his Spirit, it becomes an insupportable burden, a subject of murmuring, and an occasion of sin.

He that loveth life, (that is fond of it) for the sake of the pleasures and advantages it affords, will soon lose the love of heavenly things; the love of God, of his soul, and of the duty he owes to them: he hates it, who does not value it in comparison of eternal life, which he hopes for. A Christian gives proof of this, by mortifying himself.

Those whom God loves, in order to a happy eternity, he weans from the pleasures of this present life.

Temperance consists in a sober use of all earthly, visible things, and in confining ourselves within the compass of what is necessary.

WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.

The Almighty God enable me to conquer the temptations of riches, and to get above the allurements of this present life!

Christian self-denial is, to resist and crucify in ourselves the spirit and inclinations of Adam,—the flesh, its affections, and lusts,—to die to our passions, in order to follow the motions of the Spirit.

FASTINGS,

Necessary to bring our hearts to a penitent, holy, and devout temper; and to perform the vows that are upon us.

By fasting, by alms, and by prayers, we dedicate our bodies, goods, and souls, to God in a particular manner.

THURSDAY MEDITATIONS.

Ephes. iv. 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

Ephes. v. 4. *Foolish talking, and jesting, are not convenient.*

Preserve me, O God, from a vain conversation. Give me grace never to be ashamed or afraid to speak of thee, and of thy law.

Give me a lively sense of the value of religion, and make it the delight of my heart; that I may speak of it with judgment, seriousness, and affection, and at all seasonable times.

May that good Spirit, which appeared in the likeness of tongues of fire, warm my heart, and direct my thoughts.

Matt. xii. 34. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.—How can ye, being evil, speak good things?—By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

Psalm cxli. 3. *Set a guard, O Lord, upon my mouth; and keep the door of my lips.*

Psalm xxxvii. 30. *The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.*

Hearts truly touched with the love of God, will communicate light and heat to each other,—will speak honourably of God, of his perfections, his justice, goodness, wisdom and power,—the excellency of his laws,—the pleasantness of his service,—the instances of his love,—the rewards he has promised to his friends, and the punishments he has prepared for his enemies.

Matt. v. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

1 Thess. v. 11. *Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another.*

Heb. x. 24. *Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works.*

And let us join a good life to our religious conversation; and never contradict our tongue by our deeds.

We always do good or harm to others, by the manner of our conversation; we either confirm them in sin, or awaken them to piety.

It is too true, that some evil passion or other, and to gratify our corruption, is the aim of most conversations. We love to speak of past troubles;—hatred and ill-will make us take pleasure in relating the evil actions of our enemies. We compare, with some degree of pride, the advantages we have over others. We recount, with too sensible a pleasure, the worldly happiness we enjoy. This strengthens our passions, and increases our corruption. God grant that I may watch against a weakness which has so evil consequences.

May I never hear, never repeat with pleasure, such things as may dishonour God, hurt my own character, or injure my neighbour.

James iv. 11. *Speak not evil one of another.*

True humility makes us see our own faults, without concerning ourselves with the faults of others.

AGAINST ANGER.

Eccles. vii. 9. *Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.*

O Lord, who art a God ready to pardon, slow to anger, and of great kindness, remove far from me all occasions and effects of causeless and immoderate anger; all pride and prejudice, and too much concern for the things of this world; all intemperate speeches and indecent passions.

Give me, O God, a mild, a peaceable, a meek, and an humble spirit, that remembering my own infirmities, I may bear with those of others;—that I may think lowly of myself, and not be angry when others also think lowly of me; that I may be patient towards all men,

gentle and easy to be entreated; that God, for Christ's sake, may be so towards me. *Amen.*

Ephes. iv. 26. *Be angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*

Prov. xix. 11. *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger.*

A soft answer turneth away strife.

Prov. xvi. 32. *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.*

Rom. xii. 10. *Be kindly affectioned one towards another.*

Suppress the very beginnings of anger.

Do not use to indulge it even where there are real faults; but try the gentle way, which may probably succeed better, and, to be sure, with more ease by far.

Seldom do people vex us on purpose, and yet prejudice very often makes us think that they do

A sense of one's own integrity will make one pass by injuries more easily.

Be not too much concerned to tell the injuries you have received.

Accustom yourselves to silence, if you would learn to govern your tongue.

Deliver me, O God, from all violent and sinful passions, and give me grace to stand against them.

Matt. v. 5. *Blessed are the meek.*

Instruct me, Lord, in this Christian virtue; thou who art the master and teacher of it.

FOR FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

Luke vi. 37. *Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven*

O God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, show mercy to thy servant, in forcing my corrupt nature to be obedient to thy commands.

O God, who hast made it my everlasting interest, as well as my duty, to forgive my neighbour whatever wrong he has done me; help me to overcome all the difficulties I have to struggle with, all pride, prejudice,

and desire of rendering evil for evil, that I may not deprive my soul of that mercy which thine infinite goodness has offered to sinners.

James ii. 13. *He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewn no mercy.*

O blessed God, help me in this great concern, that I may never fall under thy wrath, for want of showing mercy to others; but grant, O blessed Jesus, that in this I may be thy disciple indeed. *Amen.*

SLANDER.

Matt. xi. 19. *The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.*

Whatever measure a good man takes, he will hardly escape the censures of the world; the best way is, not to be concerned at them.

It is an instance of humility silently to bear the calumnies which are raised against us, when they relate to ourselves only; but it is a duty of prudence and charity modestly to vindicate ourselves, when the honour of God and the Church is concerned.

Both Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were slandered; who then will complain that they cannot satisfy the world, and stop men's mouths?

Psalm cxx. 2. *Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.*

UNCHARITABLENESS.

Envy makes us see what will serve to accuse others, and not perceive what may justify them.

A truly good man is always disposed to excuse what is evil in his brethren, as far as truth will suffer him.

FRIDAY MEDITATIONS.

PENITENCE.

Luke xviii. 13. *The publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

What would become of me, if thou, O God, shouldst not have mercy upon me?

When I seriously consider these dreadful truths,—"That all they are accursed, who do err, and go astray from thy commandments,—That the unprofitable servant was cast into outer darkness:"—When I think of these things, I cannot but fear for myself, and tremble to think of the account I have to give.

Isa. lxvi. 2. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

Psalm xxxiv. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart: and will save such as be of an humble spirit.*

Look upon me, gracious Lord, with an eye of mercy.

Psalm xxv. 11. *For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquities, for they are great.*

My only comfort is, they are not too great for thy mercy.

And the Lord Jesus, our Advocate, has assured us, even with an oath, "That all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men; that is, if with hearty repentance and true faith they turn unto God.

O most powerful Advocate! I put my cause into thy hands;—let it be unto thy servant according to this word;—let thy blood and merits plead for my pardon;—say unto me, as thou didst unto the penitent in thy Gospel, "Thy sins are forgiven." And grant that I may live to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

Matt. vi. 14. *If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses.*

Even the power to perform this most kind condition must be from thy grace, O Jesus!

And I trust thou wilt grant me this grace, because the very will to ask it is from thee, and from thy will, which wills nothing in vain.

Perfect, therefore, O my Saviour, the work which thou hast begun in me; and let me feel the effects of thy grace in the constancy of my devotions,—in the care for my soul,—in the faithful discharge of my duty,—and in all such acts of righteousness, piety, and charity, by which I shall be judged at the last day.

John v. 14. *Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

Make me, O Lord, ever mindful of my infirmities and backslidings, that I may be more watchful, and more importunate for grace, for the time to come.

Matt. v. 7. *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*

Give me, O Lord, a true compassion for the wants and miseries of others, that thou mayest have compassion upon me.

Luke xv. 10. *There is joy in the presence of God over one sinner that repenteth.*

Lord, increase the number of penitents, and the joys of heaven, in delivering me and all sinners from the power of the devil, and in vouchsafing us the grace of a true conversion.

Matt. v. 4. *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

O Lord, grant that I may seek for comfort, not in the things of this world, but by a sincere repentance for my sins, by which God is dishonoured, and his judgments hanging over my head.

Luke xix. 10. *The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

O comfortable words for lost sinners; God himself seeks to save them. O thou, who sought me when I

was astray, save me for thy mercy's sake, and preserve that which thou hast sought and found.

Matt. xi. 28. *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

O Jesus, conduct and keep me to thyself, or I may surely miss the way.

Phil. ii. 12, 13. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

It was not in myself, O God, to begin the work of my conversion; finish, I beseech thee, what thou hast begun in me;—may I close with thy grace, and persevere unto my life's end.

Micah vii. 18. *God retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.*

Ezra ix. 15. *O Lord God, behold, we are before thee in our trespasses; we cannot stand before thee for this.*

Numb. xiv. 19. *Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of thy servant, according to the greatness of thy mercy.*

O say unto me, as thou didst unto Moses, "I have pardoned thee."

Ezek. xviii. 22. *All his iniquities that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him.*

Lord be merciful unto us, for we have sinned in the midst of light, and even against light; in contempt of the grace we received at our baptism.

1 John. i. 9. *If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

These are comfortable words to one whom the sight of his sins has cast into a dread of the judgments of God. Both that dread, and the hatred of sin, and the dependence upon the promise of God, and the love that that produces in the soul, are owing entirely to the blood of Jesus Christ.

2 Sam. ix. 8. *What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?*

My only support is, that my sins have not put me out of the reach of that mercy which is infinite.

Who can understand his errors? O cleanse thou me from my secret faults.

O Lord, be favourable unto me; pardon and deliver me from all sins.

Grant that my sins may never rise up in judgment against me, and bring shame and confusion of face upon me.

My soul truly waiteth still upon God, for of him cometh my salvation.

John vi. 20. *It is I, be not afraid.*

Lord Jesus, in all the troubles that shall befall me, speak these comfortable words to my soul, "It is I, be not afraid;" and then I will be secure both from presumption and despair.

John viii. 24. *If you believe not that I am he,* (that is, the Messiah, the Son of God,) *ye shall die in your sins.*

O Jesus, the only refuge of sinners, does the world know what it is to die in sin?—I believe; Lord, increase my faith, and deliver us all from the dreadful state of final impenitency.

John viii. 31. *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.*

May I, O Jesus, love the truths of thy word; make the Gospel my delight; and continue in the practice of them to my life's end.

John viii. 51. *If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

O Jesus, thou hast made known to us another death, besides that which separates the soul from the body. O may thy grace and mercy secure us from the bitter pains of eternal death.

Luke vii. 7. *Say the word, and my servant shall be healed.*

I acknowledge, O Jesus, the almighty power of thy grace, to heal all the disorders of my soul; O deal with me according to the multitude of thy mercies, and heal my soul of its sad disorders.

John iv. 24. *God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Give me, O Jesus, an inward disposition to holiness, an humble and contrite heart, a dependence on the will of God, an acknowledgment of his goodness, and a zeal for his glory; to which all the ordinances of his law and Gospel should lead us.

GOOD USE OF TIME.

Grant, O Lord, that as I have but a short time to live, and an eternal interest depending, I may not squander away one moment in vanity, or in that which will not profit me in the day of adversity.

Rom. xi. 25, 26. *Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved.*

O God, the God of Abraham, look upon thine everlasting covenant; cause the captivity of Judah and of Israel to return. They were thy people; O be thou their Saviour, that all who love Jerusalem, and mourn for her, may rejoice with her, for Jesus Christ's sake, their Saviour and ours. *Amen.*

IN TIME OF PUBLIC DISTRACTIONS.

O Sovereign Lord! I prostrate myself before thee, confessing my own sin, and acknowledging the justice of any scourge which thou shalt bring upon us; and trembling to think how much I may have contributed towards it;—beseeching thee to have compassion on us, in these days of confusion.

O Lord prevent the judgments that threaten us;—purge this nation from all such crimes as may be the cause of thy heavy displeasure against us,—from whoredom, and drunkenness; from swearing, lying, and perjury; from sacrilege, injustice, fraud, disobedience, malice, and uncharitableness. Take from among us the spirit of atheism, irreligion, and profaneness; and in mercy rebuke and convert all such as give encouragement or countenance to any of these

vices which may provoke thee to give us up to infidelity or destruction. O let thine anger be turned away from us;—give us not over unto the will of our adversaries, and unto such as strive to bring all things into confusion. Preserve this Church in the midst of all dangers; and restore unto us peace and unity;—and grant us grace to make a better use of these blessings for the time to come, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

We complain of oppression; of our laws being perverted and trampled upon; of arbitrary government, &c. Let us not be wiser than God, who judges these things to be necessary—to exercise the good,—to punish the wicked,—to reclaim the sinner,—to recover those that are going astray,—to make all serious. Let us not impeach the ways of Providence, who brings good out of evil; but reverence and submit to his will, his wisdom, and justice.

Isa. lxii. 6, 7. *Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence; give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem* (his Church) *a praise on earth.*

Thy kingdom come.—Though we are altogether unworthy of the good times thou hast promised thy Church, yet we beseech thee deprive us not of them.

O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken, and do not defer these good days, for thine own sake, oh! our God.

We hope a day is coming when all the world will come and worship thee, O God.—See Jer. xxxi.

CHRIST'S PATIENCE.

What sorrows did he undergo, and with what patience did he suffer them! Patient when Judas unworthily betrayed him with a kiss;—patient when Caiaphas despitefully used him;—patient when hurried from one place to another;—patient when Herod, with his men of war, set him at naught;—patient when Pilate so unrighteously condemned him;—patient when scourged and crowned with thorns;—patient when his cross was laid upon him, when he was reviled, reproached, scoffed

at, and every way abused. Lord Jesus, grant me patience, after this example, to bear thy holy will in all things.

CHRIST'S LOVE AND CHARITY.

Where shall we take our pattern but from thee?—Thou calledst thy followers thy friends. Thou didst stoop down to wash their feet, who were not worthy to untie thy shoe. Thou didst forgive and restore Peter, when he had abjured thee. Thou didst vouchsafe to satisfy Thomas, who would not believe but upon his own terms. Thou didst forgive and pray for thy bloody persecutors. O thou Fountain and Pattern of love, grant that I may love thee above all things, and my neighbour as myself!

SATURDAY MEDITATIONS.

PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

Deut. xxxii. 29. *O that they were wise, that they would consider their latter end.*

John ix. 4. *The night cometh, when no man can work.*

A very gracious intimation. Lord, grant that I may never forget it; and that *now, now* is the time, in which to provide for eternity.

What a wise man then, when he comes to die, would wish he had done, that he ought to do forthwith; for death is at hand, and the consequences of a surprise most dreadful. He will then wish, if he has not done it, with all his soul,

First, That he had made a just and Christian settlement of his worldly concerns; so as not to be distracted with the cares of this world, when all his thoughts should be upon another;

Secondly, That he had made his peace with God by a timely repentance;

Thirdly, That he had faithfully discharged the duties of his calling;

Fourthly, That he had weaned his affections from things temporal, and loosened the ties which fasten us to the world;

Fifthly, That he had crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts; so that being weary of this life, he might be more desirous of a better;

Sixthly, That by acts of justice, mercy, charity, and alms, he may be entitled to the mercy of God at the hour of death;

Seventhly, That he had got such habits of patience and resignation to the will of God during his health, as may render death, with all the train of miseries leading to it, less frightful and amazing;

Eighthly and lastly, That by a constant practice of devotion preparatory for death, he had learned what to pray for, what to hope for, what to depend on in his last sickness.

And this, gracious Lord, is what I wish for, what I pray for, and what I purpose shall be the constant practice of my life. *Amen.*

2 Kings xx. 1. *Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.*

May God, who has every way provided for me, and put it into my power to be just to all men, charitable to the poor, grateful to my friends, kind to my servants, and a benefactor to the public; may he add this to all his favours, and grant, that in making my last will, I may faithfully discharge all these engagements; and that for want of that, no curse may cleave to myself, or to any thing I shall leave behind me. *Amen.*

But, above all things, I beg of thee, O God, to enable me to set my inward house, my soul, in order before I die.

Give me true repentance for all the errors of my life past, and steadfast faith in thy Son Jesus Christ, that my sins may be done away by thy mercy, and my pardon sealed in heaven.

Prov. xxviii. 13. *Whoso confesseth, and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy.*

Behold, O God, a creature, liable every moment to death, prostrate before thee, begging, for Jesus Christ's sake, that faith and repentance to which thou hast promised mercy and pardon.

Discover to me, O thou Searcher of hearts, the charge that is against me, that I may know, and confess, and bewail, and abhor, and forsake, and repent of all the evils I have been guilty of.

Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, most merciful Father, who desirest not the death of a sinner; for thy Son Jesus Christ's sake, forgive me all that is past.

And, O blessed Advocate, who art able to save them for ever who come unto God by thee, seeing thou ever livest to make intercession for us, I put my cause into thy hands; let thy power defend me; thy blood and merits plead for me; supply all the defects of my repentance; procure for me a full discharge of all my sins before I die; and by thy mighty grace, confirm and strengthen me in all goodness during the remainder of my life, that my death may be a blessing to me, and that I may find mercy at the great day. *Amen.*

Ephes. iv. 24. *Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

This, O God, is what I desire, and purpose, by thy grace, to do; and do again renew the vows which I have so often made, and too often broke.

I renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh; resolving, by thy grace, neither to follow nor be led by them.

And, O God, assist me, that neither sloth nor corruption may ever make me lay aside or forget these resolutions; but that I may live to thee.—be an instrument of thy glory, by serving thee faithfully; and that I may be found so doing when thou art pleased to call me hence, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

Col. iii. 2. *Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.*

And may Almighty God, who alone can do it, effectually convince me of the vanity of all that is desirable in this present life, that I may not, like an unbeliever, look for happiness here.

Give me, O Lord, a perfect indifference for the world, its profits, pleasures, honours, fame, and all its idols.

Represent thyself unto me as my true happiness, that I may love thee with all my heart, and soul, and strength; so that when I am called out of this world, I may rejoice in hope of going to the Paradise of God, where the souls of the faithful enjoy rest and felicity, in hopes of a blessed resurrection, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

Luke ix. 23. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me,*

Blessed Jesus, who pleased not thyself, but tookest upon thee the form of a servant, give me resolution to deny my inclinations for the good things of this world, even while I may command them;—to subdue my corrupt affections, and to take revenge upon myself, for my intemperance, by mortification—for misspending my time, by retirement—for the errors of my tongue, by silence—and for all the sins of my life, by a deep humiliation; patiently submitting to all the troubles with which thou shalt think fit to exercise or punish me;—so that being effectually weaned from this world, and weary of its corruptions, I may long to repose myself in the grave, in hopes of a better life, through thy mercy and merits, O Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

1 Peter iv. 8. *Charity covereth the multitude of sins.*

Possess my soul, O God, with a sincere love for thee, and for all mankind.

Let no malice or ill-will abide in me. Give me grace to forgive all that have offended me; and forgive my many offences against thee, and against my neighbour.

Make me ever ready to give, and glad to distribute,

that thy gifts, passing through my hands, may procure for me the prayers of the poor; and that I may lay up in store for myself a good foundation against the time to come, that I may attain eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THY WILL BE DONE.

Fortify my soul, blessed Jesus, with the same spirit of submission with which thou underwentest the death of the cross, that I may receive all events with resignation to the will of God;—that I may receive troubles, afflictions, disappointments, sickness, and death itself, without amazement; these being the appointment of thy justice for the punishment of sin, and of thy mercy for the salvation of sinners.

Let this be the constant practice of my life, to be pleased with all thy choices, that when sickness and death approach, I may be prepared to submit my will to the will of my Maker.

And, O that, in the mean time, my heart may always go along with my lips in this petition,—THY WILL BE DONE. *Amen.*

Heb. ix. 27. *It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*

May the thoughts of death, and of what must follow, by the grace of God, mortify in me all carnal security, and fondness for this world, and all that is in it, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. And O that I may make my calling and election sure, that I may die in peace and rest in the mansions of glory, in hopes of a blessed resurrection and a favourable judgment at the great day.

And may the consideration of a judgment to come oblige me to examine, to try, and to judge myself, that I may prevent a severe judgment of God by a true repentance, and lead a life, answerable to amendment of life, and that I may find mercy at the great day.

John v. 28, 29. *All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and come forth; they that have done*

good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

May that dreadful word oblige me to work out my salvation with fear and trembling, that through the merits of Jesus Christ I may escape that dreadful doom!

And may the hopes of heaven and happiness sweeten all the troubles of this mortal life!

O Lord Jesus, who hast redeemed us with thy precious blood, make me to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

O let my name be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life at the great day!

I thank thee, O Lord, for all the favours of my life, and especially for that thou hast vouchsafed me time and a will to think of and prepare for death, while I am in my full strength, while I may redeem my misspent time, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

Let us consider death as a punishment, to which, as sinners, we are justly condemned.

But then let us look on it in another view, namely, as a sacrifice for sin, which God will mercifully accept of in union with that of his Son, if we submit to it as due to our offences.

It being a sacrifice, it ought to be voluntary;—being a debt, it ought to be made out of love to justice;—and being a satisfaction, we must be humbly resigned.

My God, I humbly submit to it, and to thy justice; and trust in thy mercy, and goodness, and promises, both now and at the hour of death.

Death is inevitable; the time uncertain; the judgment, which follows, without appeal; and followed by an eternity of happiness or misery.

Lord, grant that I may consider this as I ought to do.

Let me remember, that I shall come forth out of the grave, just as I go in; either the object of God's mercy, or of his wrath, to all eternity.

He lives to no purpose, who is not glorifying God.

Our greatest hopes should lie beyond the grave.

No man must go to heaven when he dies, who has not sent his heart thither while he lives.

Our greatest security is to be derived from duty, and our only confidence from the mercy of God through Jesus Christ.

Sickness, if you consider it as painful to nature, and not as a favour from God, will be a torment to you. To make it really comfortable, believe it to be ordered by a loving Father, a wise Physician; that it is the effect of his mercy for your salvation; that being fastened to the cross, you become dearer to God, as being most like his own Son. God will loose you when it is best for you.

We often hinder our recovery by trusting to physic more than to God: means succeed just as far as God pleases;—if he sends diseases as a remedy to cure the disorders of the soul, he only can cure them; while you are chastened, you are sure God loves you;—you are not sure of that when you are without chastisement.

A timely preparation for death frees us from the fear of death, and from all other fears.

A true Christian is neither fond of life, nor weary of it.

"The sting of death is sin," therefore, a holy life is the only cure for the fear of death. We ought to fear sin more than death, because death cannot hurt us but by sin.

Philip. i. 21. *To me to die is gain.*

O that I may be able to say this when I come to die; and so I shall, if I live as becomes a Christian.

Holiness being a necessary qualification for happiness, it follows, that the holiest man will be the happiest, (for there are certain degrees of glory;) therefore a Christian should lose no time to gain all the degrees of virtue and holiness he possibly can; and he that does not do so, is in a fair way of not being happy at all.

It concerns us more than our life is worth, to know what will become of us when we die.

Who will pretend to say, that he is not in a very few days to die?

The only happiness of this life is to be secure of a blessed eternity.

Now is the time in which we are to choose where and

what we are to be to all eternity; there is, therefore, no time to be lost to make this choice.

No kind of death is to be feared by him who lives well.

If we consider death as the night of that day which is given us to work in, in which to work out our salvation; and that when the night is come, no man can work; how frightful must death be to such as are not prepared for it! And if we consider it as the beginning of eternity, it is still more dreadful. It is for this reason called the "King of Terrors;" and the Psalmist, when he would express the worst of evils, saith, "The terrors of death are fallen upon me."

Judges xiii. 23. *If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering at our hands, neither would he have showed us all these things.*

This is the comfort of all God's servants; if he gives them opportunities of renewing their vows, and a will to do them; if he accepts their alms and their good deeds, that is, gives them a heart to do such;—if he touches their hearts with a sense of their unworthiness;—if he chastens them with afflictions;—if he visits them with his Holy Spirit, &c.—all these are reasons for a Christian to hope, that these graces are not in vain, but that God will crown them with pardon, favour, and happiness eternal.

Matt. xxv. 6. *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.*

A terrible voice to all such as shall meet him, not as a bridegroom, but as an inexorable judge.

Grant, O Lord, that I may not be of the number of those who dread thy coming, who cannot but with regret submit to the necessity of dying, and who have neglected to prepare for death till the last hour.

Matt. xxv. 10. *And the door was shut.*

Death shuts the door. No more to be done. It is then too late to repent, to resolve, to promise, and to do any thing.

Matt. xxv. 13. *Watch, therefore, for ye know*

neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

A person, whose life is full of good works, whose heart is devoted to God, whose faith and hope are pure and sincere, will never be surprised by death.

Matt. xxvii. 50. *Jesus Christ yielded up the ghost.* And so his death became a voluntary sacrifice. Let mine be so, O blessed Jesus! Let thy death sanctify me; and let my spirit be received with thine!

Rom. v. 1. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Give me, O Lord, that desire and earnest longing which I ought to have, for the happy moment which is to release me from this state of banishment, and translate me to a better place; and grant that I may never lose the sight of that important moment.

Let me, O God, have my lot and portion with thy saints.

When we come to die, the great enemy of our souls will then attack us with all his stratagems. It is good, therefore, to be prepared.

If he attacks your faith, say with St. Paul, "I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

I believe in God the Father, who hath made me and all the world.

I believe in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind.

I believe in God the Holy Ghost, who hath sanctified me and all the elect people of God.

I give thee hearty thanks, O Heavenly Father, that thou hast vouchsafed to call me to the knowledge of thy grace and faith in thee. Confirm this faith in me evermore;—grant that I may die in this faith, and in the peace and communion of thy Holy Church; and that I may be united to Jesus, the Head of this Church, and to all his members, by a love that shall never end. *Amen.*

John iii. 15. *Whosoever believeth in Jesus Christ shall not perish, but have eternal life.*

I believe;—Lord, increase my faith, and let it be unto thy servant according to this word.

Luke xxiii. 43. *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*

O blessed Jesus! support my spirit when I come to die, with this comfortable promise "This day shalt thou be in Paradise."

We indeed suffer justly the sentence of death. O thou, who didst nothing amiss, and yet didst suffer for me; "remember me, O Lord, now that thou art in thy kingdom."

What terror, what affliction, can equal that of a Christian, who has never thought of weaning his heart from the world till he comes to die; who can find nothing in his life, but what must render him unworthy of mercy! But the greatest of all miseries would be to despair of mercy, and not to have recourse to it.

Need a person who has received the sentence of death, be persuaded to prepare for death? And is not this our case?

Consider death, as appointed by God, as a necessary penance,—as the completion of the Christian sacrifice,—as a passage to a better life,—as the deliverance of a prisoner,—as the recalling of an exile from banishment,—as the end of all miseries:—And then you will strip it of much of that terror which it has when considered as an accident to nature only.

Luke xii. 36. *And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord.*

He who waits for his master will always endeavour to be in that state in which he desires to be found.

A Christian should not look upon death with anxiety, but with the satisfaction of a good servant, who waits with impatience for his master's return, in hopes of being approved of.

Luke xii. 40. *Be ye ready also, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*

And are not so many sudden deaths sufficient to convince us of the folly of assuring ourselves of one day? Let every one of us, therefore, count himself of the num-

ber of those that are to be surprised by death; this will make us watchful.

Luke xii. 43. *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing;* that is, doing his duty.

And then, miserable will he be whom death surpriseth either doing evil, or doing nothing, or doing that which God does not require of him. Can one imagine that the generality of Christians believe this truth? Suffer me not, O God, to fall into a forgetfulness of it.

We complain (saith Seneca) of the shortness of life: he answers, "Vita, si scias uti, longa est." Life is long, if you know how to use it. But then it is Christianity only can teach us how to use our life; namely, "in working out our own salvation:" and we are sure it is long enough for that, because God has appointed it for that very end.

As Christianity alone can take from us the love of life, so it is this alone that can free us from the fear of death.

Eternity adds an infinite weight to all our actions, whether good or bad.

If we desire that our death should, like that of Jesus Christ, be a sacrifice of love and obedience, we must take care to make our life so too.

Acts ix. 36. *This woman was full of good works and alms-deeds; and she died.*

Happy that soul which death finds rich, not in gold, furniture, learning, reputation, or barren purposes and desires, but in good works.

Acts vii. 59. *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*

O my God, enable me to live to thee; that when the hour of death shall come, I may thus, with confidence, offer up my spirit to Jesus Christ.

Rev. iii. 3. *Thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*

Is it not then the highest presumption to persuade ourselves that we have always time sufficient, when Je-

sus Christ himself declares that we have not one moment certain?

Death being the effect and punishment of sin, we ought to expect it with great submission, since it honours God by expiating of sin, and saves the man by punishing the sinner.

It is purely for want of faith that we tremble at the approach of our Deliverer; and which is to destroy in us the reign of sin, and instate us in that of glory.

Let us resign up ourselves to God, as to the manner in which it shall please him to determine our lives, praying only that it may be to his glory and our salvation.

What does it signify how this house of clay perisheth, which hinders the perfect renovation of the soul, and the sight of God?

2 Cor. v. 1. *For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

We know, we believe, we promise ourselves this, but we think too seldom of it, and we still make less use of what we know, in order to wean our hearts from this world.

Would we look upon our bodies as houses of clay just ready to fall, we should think of that eternal house, we should sigh after our native country, and be willing to leave a place of misery and banishment.

Remember, that death is the punishment of sin; we ought, therefore, to resign ourselves up to it in a Christian manner, looking upon ourselves as condemned to it in Adam.

He who has lived and looked on earth, as in a place of banishment, will look upon death as a gracious deliverance from it.

Consider well, that life is given and continued for no other end, but to glorify God in working out our own salvation.

A man goes with confidence to meet the bridegroom, when he has been faithful to him, and believes him to be his friend.

Heb. ii. 15. *And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life long subject to bondage.*

Bondage is the sentence of rebellious slaves;—we were condemned to it in Adam; and being under this sentence of death and the Divine Justice, we ought to expect it with submission, and be always prepared for it. This is the only way to be secure, and from fearing death when it comes.

Gather us, O God, to the number of thine elect, at what time and in what manner thou pleasest;—only let us be without reproach, and blameless;—let faith, and love, and peace, accompany our last periods.

We look upon a body without a soul with horror. We can see a body with a soul, which is like to die eternally, without concern.

Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, I am delivered through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Grant, O Lord, that though my outward man decay daily, yet that my inward man may grow and increase in piety and virtue unto the day of my death.

He that hath lived best will stand in need of mercy at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment;—and he that hath lived the worst, has not sinned beyond the efficacy of the blood of Christ, provided his repentance be sincere.

My God, let thy glory be magnified by saving a sinner, by redeeming a captive slave, by enlightening a heart overwhelmed in darkness, by changing a wicked heart, by pardoning innumerable transgressions, iniquities, and sins.

If my hopes were placed upon any thing but the infinite mercies of God, in Jesus Christ, which can never fail, I should utterly despair.

Acts ii. 21. *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.*

These, my God, are thine own words;—give me leave to trust in them, to depend on them, both now and at the hour of death.

John xvii. 4. *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

O Lord, the very best of men come infinitely short of this pattern; how then shall I, an unprofitable servant, appear before my Lord and Judge.

Gen. iii. 15. *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.*

This, my God, is thy sure, thy eternal promise;—I believe it; I trust in it; I will hold me fast by it.

Luke xxii. 42. *Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.*

May I, O blessed Jesus when my death approaches, breathe out my last with these words, and with the same spirit of submission.

DEATH OF FRIENDS.

Let us cast our eyes upon sin, which is the cause of death, and then we shall weep with reason.

Preserve in us a lively sense of the world to come.

And when I shall not be able to pray for myself, the good Lord favourably hear the prayers of his Church for me.

Grant that the sins which I have committed in this world may not be imputed unto me; but that, escaping the gates of hell, I may dwell in the regions of light, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, until the day of the general resurrection, and that I then may hear those joyful words of thy Son—"Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

Grant that I may have a perfect conquest over the world, sin, and death, through Christ, who by his death hath overcome him who hath the power of death.

Luke xxiii. 43. *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*

O Jesus, who hadst compassion on this thief, even at the hour of death, have mercy upon me, who now repent of all my misdoings. Suffer not the gates of Paradise to be shut against me when I die, "thou that hast opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers"

Restore my soul, at the great day, to life eternal.

Give me the patience of Job, the faith of Abraham, the courage of Peter, and the comfort of Paul, and a true submission to thy will.

Apply to my soul all the wholesome medicines of thy Son's passions, death, and resurrection, against the powers of Satan, against all unreasonable fears and despair, and ease my fearful conscience.

Hear the prayers of thy Church for me, and for all in my condition, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Psalm lxxi. 9. *Cast me not away in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth me.*

Grant, O Lord, that the end of my life may be truly Christian; without sin, without shame, and if it so please thee, without pain.

Psalm lxxiii. 26. *My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

1 Sam. iii. 18. *It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.*

Lord, be merciful unto me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.

I confess my wickedness, and am sorry for my sin.

For thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart, and will save such as are of an humble spirit.

Psalm xxxix. 8. *And now Lord, what is my hope? truly my hope is in thee.*

Psalm ciii. 14. *Lord, thou knowest whereof we are made; that we are but dust.*

Let my misery, my fear, my sorrow, move thee to compassion.

Despise not, O Lord, the work of thine own hands.

I freely forgive all that have offended me.

O thou that never failest them that seek thee, have pity on me.

Nevertheless, though I am sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in thee.

O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

O go not far from me, for trouble is at hand, and there is none to help me.

The sorrows of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my troubles!

O keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be confounded, for I have put my trust in thee.

Withdraw not thy mercy from me, O Lord; let thy loving-kindness and thy truth always preserve me.

O Lord, let it be thy pleasure to deliver me; make haste, O Lord, to help me.

Show thy servant the light of thy countenance, and save me for thy mercy's sake.

O deliver me, for I am helpless and poor, and my heart is wounded within me.

Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our misery and trouble?

My God, save thy servant, who putteth his trust in thee.

Thou, O Lord, art full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, plenteous in goodness and truth.

When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God: when my heart is vexed, I will complain.

Will the Lord absent himself for ever? Will he be no more entreated?

Hath God forgotten to be gracious? And I said, It is mine own infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.

Luke xii. 33. *Sell all that ye have, and give to the poor.* That is, renounce all the pleasures that wealth affords, rather then defraud the poor and distressed of their right:—It is utterly impossible to take delight in wealth and love God with all the soul.

Matt. xxv. 40. *For as much* (for as often) *as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

As often?—Who then would miss any occasion? The least?—Who then would despise any object? To

me?—So that in serving the poor, we serve Jesus Christ. O comfortable declaration!

Mark ix. 41. *Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily,* (with an oath he assures us) *he shall not lose his reward.*

This should always, if possible, be our intention: This poor, oppressed, miserable man, belongs to Christ. This would wonderfully enhance the value of our good deeds before God.

ALMS.

1 Cor. xiii. 3. *And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

If external acts of charity do not proceed from charity, that is, from a love of God, and of our neighbour for his sake, they are as nothing in the sight of God. My God, pour into my heart this most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtue.

Gal. vi. 10. *Let us do good unto all men.*

He who seeks for Jesus Christ in the poor, in order to relieve and assist him, will not be too solicitous to find any other merit in them than that of Jesus Christ.

For our earthly things, O Lord, give us heavenly; for temporal, eternal.

Luke iii. 11. *He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none.*

That is, let him that hath plenty and to spare, of the necessaries of life, give to him that wants.

The portion of charity, appointed by God himself to his own people, for the relief of the poor, was every year a thirtieth part of all their income, or a tenth every third year.

This was the Jews' proportion. He that came short of this was a breaker of the law, and without repentance and restitution, had no hopes of pardon.

The Christian's proportion ought to be greater, as his hopes and reward will be greater.

We should, in all our charities, direct our eyes to-

wards Christ in his members; it is this which heightens the smallest gifts. Men reward what is done on human motives; God, such as are done for his sake.

He that for his good actions expects the applause of men, runs the hazard of losing the reward of God.

The poor are, as it were, the receivers of the rights and dues belonging unto God: we must have a care of defrauding them.

Luke xi. 41. *But rather give alms of such things as you have*, (or as you are able) *and all things are clean to you.* That is, proportion your alms to your estate, lest God proportion your estate to your alms.

It is a necessary Christian duty (whatever men think of it) to part with our worldly enjoyments for the sake of Christ.

The very best men are only instruments in God's hands, to receive and to give what God bestows upon them. And this they should do, without any desire of glory or self-interest.

Let us make light of money and riches, and send it before us into the heavenly treasures, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt; but where it will be kept, to our eternal advantage, under the custody of God himself.

Thou, O Lord, hast been all mercy to me; grant that I may be all mercy to others for Christ's sake.

Remember to give to those that are ashamed to ask; and do not forget your poor relations, lest you be worse than an infidel.

Rom. xii. 8. *He that showeth mercy, let him do it with cheerfulness.*

The good Lord perserve me from vanity, and from seeking applause for my charity.

Not unto me, but unto thee, O God, be the thanks, and praise, and glory.

The merits of the poor is not to be the rule of our charity. God himself maketh the sun to shine upon the evil and the good.

If we would but moderate our vanity, we should always have enough for charity.

Send thy blessing upon my substance, and continue to me a willing mind to help such as have need, according to my ability.

Good advice, and devout petitions, should accompany our charity.

O God, who knowest the necessities of all the creatures, give thy poor the spiritual things they stand in need of.

Support thy poor members, O Jesus, under all their difficulties, and sanctify their bodily wants to the salvation of their souls.

Lord, grant that they may bear their poor estate with patience and resignation, and that we may one day meet in the Paradise of God.

Jesus Christ is continually humbled in his members; some are poor, in prison, sick, naked, hungry, &c. Let me, O Lord, see and help thee in all these objects.

A man that has faith will be glad to discharge himself of some part of the burden of temporal goods, in order to secure those that are eternal; and to be in some measure the preserver of his brethren.

Psalm cxii. 5. *A good* (a charitable) *man will guide his affairs with discretion.* That is, he will cut off and retrench all needless expenses in apparel, diet, diversions, &c. that he may give to him that needeth.

Let your alms be in secret as much as may be.

CHARITY; OR, THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOUR.

It is but the first essay of charity to give alms.

Whoever shows mercy to men will certainly receive mercy from God.

1 John iii. 15. *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.*

A man has already killed him in his heart, whose life is grievous to him, and at whose death he would rejoice.

1 John iii. 14. *He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

Can we believe that it is God that saith this. and delay one moment to be reconciled?

It is not enough to love our brethren; we must love them upon a principle of faith, in the name, for the sake, and as members of Jesus Christ.

Luke vi. 37. *Forgive, and it shall be forgiven you.*

Give me, O my God, a heart full of Christian meekness and charity, that I may willingly forget the evil I have received, and be always disposed to do good to others.

We love our neighbour after a Christian manner when we love him for God's sake; and for God's sake do him good.

THE LITANY.

O God the Father of Heaven; have mercy upon me. keep and defend me.

O God the Son, Redeemer of the world; have mercy upon me, save and deliver me.

O God the Holy Ghost; have mercy upon me. strengthen and comfort me.

Remember not, Lord, mine offences, nor the offences of my forefathers; neither take thou vengeance of our sins: spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever.

From thy wrath and heavy indignation; from the guilt and burden of my sins; from the dreadful sentence of the last judgment;

Good Lord, deliver me.

From the sting and terrors of conscience; from impatience, distrust, and despair; from extremity of sickness and pain, which may withdraw my mind from God;

Good Lord, deliver me.

From the bitter pangs of eternal death; from the gates

of hell; from the powers of darkness; and from the illusions of Satan;

Good Lord, deliver me.

By thy manifold and great mercies; by thy manifold and great merits; by thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy bitter cross and passion; by thy mighty resurrection; by thy glorious ascension, and most acceptable intercession; and by the graces of the Holy Ghost;

Good Lord, deliver me.

For the glory of thy name; for thy loving-mercy and truth's sake.

Good Lord, deliver me.

In my last and greatest need; in the hour of death; and in the day of judgment;

Good Lord, deliver me.

As thou hast delivered all thy saints and servants which called upon thee in their extremity;

Good Lord, deliver me; and receive my soul for thy mercy's sake.

Be merciful unto me, and forgive me all my sins, which, by the malice of the devil, or by my own frailty, I have at any time of my life committed against thee.

Lay not to my charge, what in the lust of the eye, the pride of life or vanity, I have committed against thee.

Lay not to my charge what, by an angry spirit, by vain and idle words, by foolish jesting, I have committed against thee.

Make me partaker of all thy mercies and promises in Christ Jesus.

Vouchsafe my soul a place of rest in the Paradise of God, with all thy blessed saints; and my body a part in the blessed resurrection.

O Lord God, Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world;

Have mercy upon me.

Thou that takest away the sins of the world;

Grant me thy peace.

Thou that sittest at the right hand of God;

Have mercy upon me.

Have mercy upon me, and receive my prayer; even the prayer which thou hast taught me;—

Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c.

O Lord, deal not with me after my sins; neither reward me after mine iniquities.

O God, merciful Father, that despisest not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desires of such as be sorrowful, mercifully assist my prayers which I make before thee—at such times especially as I am preparing for death and for eternity. And, O Lord, graciously hear me, that those evils, those illusions, and assaults which my great enemy worketh against me, may be brought to naught, and by the providence of thy goodness they may be dispersed; that thy servant, being delivered from all temptations, may give thanks to thee, with thy Holy Church, to all eternity. *Amen.*

Let us endeavour, by a timely repentance, to prevent the reproaches which otherwise our consciences will cast upon us at the hour of death.

THE SUPPORT OF A PENITENT AT THE HOUR OF DEATH.

John iii. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his onlybegotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

1 John ii. 1. *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,*—who came into the world to save sinners,—who died for us when we were his enemies, that he might offer us unto God.

It is our Judge himself who hath assured us, that "all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men."

EJACULATIONS.

Take from me all evil imaginations,—all impurity of thought,—all inclinations to lust,—all envy, pride, and hypocrisy,—all falsehood, deceit, and an irregular life,—all covetousness, vain-glory, and sloth,—all malice, anger and wrath,—all remembrance of injuries,—every thing that is contrary to thy will, O most holy God.

May I never hear with pleasure, nor ever repeat such things as may dishonour God, or injure my neighbour, or my own character.

O give me light to see, a heart to close with, and power to do thy will, O God.

LOVE OF GOD, &c.

Bless me, O God, with a love of thee, and of my neighbour. Give me peace of conscience, the command of my affections; and for the rest, "thy will be done."

O King of Peace, give us thy peace; keep us in love and charity.

Make thyself, O God, the absolute master of my heart.

"They that be whole need not a physician." It belongs to thee, O Sovereign Physician, to make us sensible of our maladies, and to make us go to thee for help. O say unto my soul this word of salvation, "Behold, thou art made whole."

"Without me ye can do nothing."—Miserable indeed is he who pretends to walk without thee. O give me light to see, a heart to close with, and a power to do thy will. From thy Spirit I hope to receive these graces.

John xii. 26. *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and him will my Father honour.*

Let me never flatter myself that I serve thee, my Saviour, unless I follow thy example at the expense of every thing I love or fear besides. O keep my heart fixed upon that *honour* which God has prepared for those that follow thee.

O Divine Spirit, render me worthy of thy presence and consolation.

Fill my heart with a holy dread of thy judgments.

Give me a true sense and knowledge of the danger and the evil of sin; and may I, with a prudent moderation only, be concerned for temporal things.

Jesus Christ is always in his temple, and near you, (if your soul be fit for him to dwell in) to him apply on all occasions:

As your *Master*, for grace to study, to love, and to follow his instructions. He requires nothing but what he first practised himself:

As your *Lord;* that you may love and serve him faithfully, and fulfil all his commands:

As your *Pattern;* that you may follow his example, and imitate his virtues:

As your *Saviour;* that he may be your refuge and confidence, your strength and support, your peace and consolation, your Saviour now and at the hour of death:

As your *King;* that he may give laws to your soul, and that you may surrender yourself to his commands; and never rebel, or resist his authority:

As your *Shepherd.* Keep me in thy flock by thy almighty grace. I am one of the lost sheep which thou camest to seek. Take me under thy care, and restore me to thy fold. Increase thy flock for the honour of thy name.

WILFUL SIN.

Let me rather choose to die than to sin against my conscience.

PENITENT

I am ashamed to come before thee, but I must come or perish. I know that thou art angry with me for my sins, but I know too that thou pitiest me, or why do I yet live? Make me full of sorrow for my sin, and full of hopes of thy mercy and pardon. Look upon the infirmities of thy servant, and consider his weakness. Sensible of my own sad condition, weak and miserable,

sinful and ignorant, liable to eternal death, I prostrate myself before thee, imploring thy help and pardon.

Gracious God, never abandon me to the opposition I shall at any time make to thy grace.

Blessed be God, that he has so often prevented me, and not left me to the desires of my own heart.

Put a stop to the torrent of wickedness and profaneness which carries all before it.

I confess my sins to thee, O God; do thou hide them from all the world.

Eternity. Lord, imprint upon my heart a lively idea of eternity, that the sorrowful passages of this life, which are so uneasy and frightful to nature, may vanish, or be borne with patience.

Example. Pardon my sin, and forgive all such as have been misled by any evil example of mine.

Matt. v. 48. *Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.*

O Divine Repairer of our corrupt nature, may thy all-powerful grace make me as perfect as thou hast commanded me to be!

HOLINESS.

O God, who hast called me to holiness, give me a firm faith in thy power, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that by his assistance I may get the mastery over all my sins and corruption; that I may be redeemed from all iniquity; that I may be holy, as he who has called me is holy.

Possess my soul with an earnest desire of pleasing thee, and with a fear of offending thee.

Let me be ever ready to forgive injuries, and backward to offer any.

Give me, O Lord, faith and patience, that I may neither murmur at thy appointments, nor be angry against the instruments of thy justice.

Deliver me from the errors and vices of the age I live in; from infidelity, wicked principles, from profaneness, heresies, and schism.

I most heartily thank thee, O God, for thy perpetual

care of me, for all thy mercies bestowed upon me, for the blessings of nature and of grace.

Grant, O God, that I may never receive thy grace in vain, but that I may live like one who believes and hopes for the joys of heaven.

Let me ever be sorry for my sins, thankful for thy blessings, fear thy judgments, love thy mercies, remember thy presence.

Give me an humble mind, a godly fear, and a quiet conscience.

Weaken, O Lord, the power of Satan in this place and the tyranny of his ministers.

IN TIME OF PESTILENCE OR DANGER.

Set thy saving mark upon our houses, and give order to the destroyer not to hurt us.

John xvi. 23. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.*

Upon this promise, blessed Lord, I depend; beseeching thee, O heavenly Father, for thy dear Son's sake to give me the graces I most stand in need of.

AFTER PRAYERS.

Vouchsafe us those graces and blessings which thou knowest to be needful for us, notwithstanding our great unworthiness.

Riches. Shut my heart, O Lord, against the love of worldly riches, lest I betray thee as Judas did.

May the Holy Spirit, O God, fill my heart, that it may appear in all my words and actions, that I am governed by it.

Luke x. 33. *And when he saw him, he had compassion on him.*

O Jesus, the true Samaritan, look upon the wounds which sin hath caused in my soul, and have compassion on me.

May I always resign my will and my desires to him who knows what is good for us better than we ourselves do.

HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Give me, O God, a sincere love for the truths of the Gospel, a teachable heart, and an obedient will.

Perseverance. Finish, O my God, the works of mercy and conversion which thou hast begun in me.

Save, O Lord Jesus, a soul which thou hast redeemed by thy blood.

There is no merit in me, O God, to attract thy mercy and goodness, but only my great misery and blindness. May I make a suitable return by a holy life.

According to the greatness of thy goodness, and the multitude of thy mercies, look upon me.

Sanctify my soul and body with thy heavenly blessings, that they may be made thy holy habitation, and that nothing may be found in me that may offend the eyes of thy Majesty.

Protect and keep me in the midst of the dangers of this corrupt world; and by thy light and grace direct me in the way to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ.

Morning. I laid me down and slept, and rose again, for the Lord sustained me. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Raise me up, O Lord, at the last day, to life and happiness everlasting.

Blessed be the Lord for his mercies renewed unto me every morning.

O that my eyes may ever be fixed upon the example that our blessed Lord hath left us, and that I may daily endeavour to follow him. *Amen.*

Night. May the Saviour and Guardian of my soul take me under his protection this night and evermore.

1 Cor. vii. 35. *Attend upon the Lord without distraction.*

O Holy Spirit of Grace, help my infirmities, that I may fix my thoughts upon my duty; and that I may serve thee with all my heart and mind.

That I may never give way to wandering thoughts, but watch against them continually.

Look upon me, O Lord, and pity me; make me, and let me be thine by the choice of my will.

Make me serious and thoughtful at all times, that I may not fail being so when I attend upon God.

Let not my heart, O God, be inclined to any evil thing. Keep me, O God, from every thing that may displease thee. O make me wise unto salvation.

Phil. iv. 13. *I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.*

O that I may never forfeit this power by presumption or want of faith.

John xx. 28. *Thomas said, My Lord and my God.*

Thou art indeed, O Jesus, my Lord, for thou hast redeemed me by thy precious blood; thou art my God, for I am dedicated to thee, and ctified by thy Spirit.

Acts ii. 44. *And all that believed were together, and had all things common.*

May God grant, that as we are all members of the same body, have one and the same Father, the same Saviour, the same Spirit, and hope to meet in the same Paradise; that we may live in unity and godly love, and be charitable according to our ability.

The good Lord grant, that in the day of Christ I may rejoice that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.

COLLECTS:

THEIR TENDENCY.

Comfort of the Holy Ghost, - -	1 Sunday after Ascension
Humiliation, - - - - - -	Whitsunday
Direction of the Holy Ghost, - -	19 after Trinity
Manifold Gifts of the Holy Ghost, -	St. Barnabas
Means of Grace. Hearing, -	St. Bartholom. St. Luke
——— Reading, - -	2 Sunday in Advent
——— Fasting, - -	1 in Lent 10 and 23 after Trinity
To convert us from Sin, - - -	1 in Adv. 1 after Easter St. Andrew, St. James, St. Matthew
Pardon of Sin and Acceptance with God,	12, 21, 24 after Trinity Purification 2 after Epiphany
To rescue us from Temptation, - -	4 in Adv. 4 after Epiph. 18 after Trinity
To enable us to do good, - - -	5 after Easter 1, 9, 11, 13, 17, 25, aft. Trin.
To bring us to Glory, . - -	Epiphany, 6 aft. Epiph.
Regeneration - - - - - -	Christmas-day
Charity, - - - - - - -	Quinquagesima
Mortification, - - - - - -	Circumcision, Easter-eve
Contrition, - - - - - -	Ash-Wednesday
Sincerity, - - - - - - -	3 after Easter
Love of God and his Law, - - -	4 after Easter 6 and 14 after Trinity
Heavenly Desires, - - - -	Ascension
Faith right, - - - - - -	Trinity Sunday
Faith firm, - - - - - -	7 after Trinity St. Thomas, St. Mark
Imitation of Christ, - - -	6 in Lent, 2 after Easter
Imitation of Saints, - -	St. Stephen, St. Paul St. Philip and St. James St. John Baptist Innocents, All Saints

Guarding of Angels and God's Providence, - - - -	2, 3, 4, 20 after Trinity St. Michael
Deliverance from Enemies, -	3 in Lent.
Deliverance from Judgments, -	Sexagesima, Septuagesi 4 in Lent
Support under Afflictions, - -	3 and 4 after Epiphany
Defence from Evil, and Supply of Good, - - - -	8, 15 after Trinity
For Jews, Turks, &c. - -	3 Good-Friday
That ministers may be fit, diligent, and successful, - - -	St. Matthias, St. Peter 3 in Advent
That the people may be kept in Truth, Unity, and Peace. -	1 Good-Friday, St. John, St. Simon and St. Jude, 5, 6, 12 after Trinity

LENOX LIBRARY
NEW YORK

FROM

BISHOP KEN'S MANUAL OF PRAYERS

FOR YOUNG PERSONS.

DIRECTIONS IN TIME OF SICKNESS.

If it please God to visit you with disease, let it be your first care to make your peace with heaven; for by taking you off from your usual studies and pursuits, God gives you a call to repent; delay not, then, in the beginning of your sickness, to call your ways to remembrance, but let self-examination and repentance occupy the chiefest place in your thoughts.

Beware of deferring this duty because you are young, and think you may have time enough to repent hereafter; for you see that persons younger than yourself die, and you are not sure to outlive this disease; and if you should put it off till your sickness becomes more severe, it may perhaps take away your senses; or, if it does not, it will much more indispose you to prayer and recollection. In the beginning of your sickness begin your repentance, and say over this following prayer; and not only say, but endeavour to practise it.

PRAYER IN THE BEGINNING OF SICKNESS.

O Heavenly Father, who in thy wisdom knowest what is best for me, if it seem good in thy sight, remove this disease from me, so that I may employ my health to thy glory, and praise thy name.

But if thou art pleased that it should greatly increase, I willingly submit to thy afflicting hand; for thou art wont to chastise those whom thou dost love; and I am sure thou wilt lay no more on me than thou wilt enable me to bear.

I know, O my God, that thou sendest this sickness on me for my good, even to humble and to reform me; O grant it may work that saving effect in me.

Lord, create in me a true penitent sorrow for all my sins past; a steadfast faith in thee, and sincere resolutions of amendment for the time to come. Deliver me from all frowardness and impatience, and give me an entire resignation to thy divine will; O suffer not the disease to take away my senses, and do thou continually supply me with devout and holy thoughts. Lord, bless all the means that are used for my recovery, and restore me to my health; but if otherwise thou hast appointed for me, thy blessed will be done. O wean my affection from all things below, and fill me with ardent desires after heaven. Lord, fit me for thyself, and at thine own good time bring me to those joys unspeakable and full of glory. Grant this for the sake of thy only Son Jesus, my Saviour, in whose holy words I sum up all my wants: *Our Father, &c.*

SHORT PRAYERS IN TIME OF SICKNESS.

Father, if it be possible, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.

Trouble and heaviness have taken hold upon me; but my sure trust is in thee, O Lord.

Forsake me not, O my God, when my strength faileth me; haste thee to help me, O Lord God of my salvation.

Lord, teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.

Deal thou with me, O Lord, according to thy name, for sweet is thy mercy.

Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is even in thee.

O, my soul, tarry thou the Lord's leisure; be strong and he shall comfort thy heart, and put thou thy trust in the Lord.

Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.

In my Father's house are many mansions; and thou, Lord Jesus, art gone before to prepare a place for us, that where thou art we may be also.

Lord, be merciful to me, a miserable sinner.

O, Lord God, we must all, at the last day, appear before thy judgment-seat; O cleanse me from my sins, that I may be found blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus.

As the day goeth away, and the shadows of the evening are stretched out, so passeth away my life, even like a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, the good things which God hath laid up for those that love him.

I know, Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou, of very faithfulness, hast caused me to be troubled.

O, Heavenly Father, my hope is wholly in thy mercy, and in the merits and sufferings of my Saviour.

A THANKSGIVING AFTER RECOVERY.

Glory be to thee, O heavenly Father, for the sickness with which thou hast in mercy visited me.

Before I was troubled I went wrong; but now I will keep thy word.

It is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I might learn thy statutes.

Glory be to thee, O Lord; glory be to thee for delivering me from the terrors of death, and restoring me to my health again

I called upon the Lord in my trouble, and the Lord heard me at large. I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord.

Praise the Lord, therefore, O my soul; as long as I have my life, which at first God gave me, and which he has now restored to me, I will sing praise unto his name.

O Lord God, who hast, in thy tender mercy, prolonged my days in this world, give me grace to spend in thy service that life which thou hast now lengthened. O give me grace to perform all my new resolutions of obedience, and so to live in the fear and love of thee all the remainder of my time, that I may at last die at peace with the whole world, and at peace with thee; grant this for the sake of thy well-beloved Son, and my Saviour, in whose holy words I sum up all my wants: *Our Father, &c.*

Reader, if you have reaped any good from these Prayers and Instructions, give God hearty thanks for it, and let this encourage you to make the more frequent use of them; and may God, of his infinite mercy, bless them every day more and more to your growth in grace, and to his own glory, for the sake of his blessed Son. *Amen.*

ON

SELF-EXAMINATION:

A

SERMON.

BY THE LATE

THOMAS WILSON, D.D

BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN.

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SELF-EXAMINATION.

2 Cor. xiii. 5.

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; * [that is, *whether ye be true Christians, and in the way of salvation;—whether your lives be according to your profession.*]

My Christian brethren! I am going to lay before you the absolute necessity, as we hope for heaven, of coming to some certainty, whether we are in the way of salvation or not.

Every body must own, that it is a matter of great concern for a man to know, whether his faith is such as it should be,—such as will please God,—such as will influence our lives, and fit us for heaven. I need not, therefore, use many words to prevail with you to attend very seriously to what you are going to hear.

One cannot, in charity, but conclude, that any one of you would part with his life, sooner than he would renounce his faith and his Christianity. This being the general persuasion of all Christians, that whoever renounces his faith, renounces all hopes of salvation. And so indeed he does. We have the word of the Son of God for it: *He that believeth not shall be damned.*†

But then let us have a great care of deluding ourselves, by fancying, that because we would not for all the world renounce our Christanity, that, therefore, we are such Christians as we should be. For he only is a true Christian, who believes as he should do, and leads a life agreeable to his faith.

Now, this ought to put every one of us upon examining ourselves, in very good earnest, *whether we be in the faith;* that is, in other words, whether we be Christians in *deed* and in *truth*, as well as in *name?* By doing this, we shall either have the comfort of knowing that we are in the way of happiness; or else we shall see our danger, which through the grace of God may awaken us, and put us upon a new course of life.

* See Matt. vii. 20, 21. Acts xxiii. 1. Rom. viii. 16. 2 Cor. v. 7. Gal. vi. 3, 4. 2 Tim. ii. 19. James ii. 17. 1 John ii. 21. † Mark xvi. 16.

In order to this, we need not examine into the many disputes among Christians, to settle our faith and our religion. We have a rule of faith, which will infallibly lead us to heaven and happiness, if our life be but answerable to our creed. But that which I would propose to you, is a much surer way of knowing whether you are sound in the faith; that is, by examining, *whether your life and conversation be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ.*

If a man's life be bad, his faith cannot be such as it should be; if a man's life be truly Christian, it is a good sign his faith is so too; that, therefore, which I would most earnestly press upon you, and which I would charge myself with, is this:—First, to examine every man himself, and consider the great truths which we know, and profess to believe. And then to examine very particularly what effect *this faith* has upon our lives.

To begin with what we know and believe *concerning ourselves*; that is, that we are a race of sinful creatures, sadly fallen from the condition in which we were *most certainly* at first created;—that we have within us the seed of every sin whatever;—that we are prone to evil continually;—that we are *by nature the children of wrath*;—and that, as such, God can take no pleasure in us.

Will it not be expected, that every one, who knows and believes this, should be very humble, and very thankful to God, who did not overlook lost mankind when they had brought themselves into this sad condition.

In the next place, we profess to believe, that we are in this life *in a state of trial*, in order to mend our corrupt nature, that we may be capable of *that happiness* for which God at first created us.

Will any Christian, who professeth to believe this, and that he is utterly unfit for heaven until his nature be mended;—will he, notwithstanding, sit still, and be unconcerned, and lose this time of trial, and defeat the gracious designs of God, and live only to make his condition worse, by contracting evil habits, and offending his Maker continually?

Every Christian *must see*, that such a belief, and such a life, are most hateful to God; and that such a Christian (if he will call himself a Christian) is in a much worse condition than the most abandoned heathen.

We all believe, and know for certain, that all mankind are under the righteous sentence of death; that this sentence is sure to be executed, but at a time we know not of; and that, when we die, we shall either be very happy or very miserable forever and ever.

Now, will any Christian, who professeth in earnest to believe this, live as if he were never to die? or will he think it best to endeavour to lose the remembrance of death and of what must follow by diverting himself with other fooleries, by the hurry of business, or by bewitching pleasures?

Is this the behaviour of thoughtful people? Very far from it. You will be convinced it is not, if you will go and see a serious Christian labouring under any mortal ailment, which he is sure will put an end to his life in a month's time, or perhaps sooner: you will find such a man very serious, very indifferent for all the profits or pleasures this world can afford him: resolving to do every thing that may recommend him to the favour of God, whenever he shall die; and you would count him worse than a madman, if you should find him otherwise disposed—if you should find him under no concern for his soul, but by all manner of ways diverting his thoughts from what is sure to befall him, whether he thinks of it or not.

And yet the generality of Christians will not consider, that this is their own case.—They *believe*, they *know*, they *are sure*, they must die, and sooner perhaps than they imagine. The Gospel, which they say they believe, tells them what *for certain* must follow, either eternal happiness, if they have led good lives, or eternal misery, if they die unconverted: and yet they put the thoughts of death far from them, because they will not prepare for it; at the same time they would die with fear, if they did not hope to be saved.

But be assured of it, Christians, that no man must flatter himself with these hopes. He only who is convinced of his own misery and danger, through the corruption of his nature, and understanding, by his Christian faith, the way to get out of this sad condition; he only who can sincerely resolve—I *must* not, I *dare* not, I *will* not, be any longer indifferent how I lead my life; I will, through the grace of God, live by faith; I will endeavour to know what God requires me to do, what I may hope for, if I strive to please him; and what I am to fear, if I continue to provoke him by my sins.

Every Christian, who thus believes, resolves, and lives accordingly, is in the way of salvation.

We come now to consider what we believe *concerning* God, that we may know whether our faith is such as it should be.

We believe that God is infinitely great and good; and that we stand indebted to him for every thing we *have*, or *value*, or *hope for*.

Now, let us consider, if we were half so much obliged to any man on earth, how highly should we value him; how dearly should we love him; how much should we think of him; how should we strive to please him; and how should we be troubled, when we should be so unhappy as to offend him! Why now, Christians, if you thus *believe*, if you thus *value*, if you thus *love*, and *desire to please* God, and are careful not to offend him, your *faith* hath its saving fruits; it is such as it should be.

To proceed:—You believe of God, that he is *most holy;* and that as such he cannot but be displeased with every thing that is impure or wicked. Fix this truth in your heart; and your

faith will keep you at the greatest distance from all sins of impurity and uncleanness, and from all temptations that lead to them; especially when the same faith assures you, that such sins, if not bitterly repented of, will not only shut you out of heaven but will cause you to have your portion with unclean devils.

You profess to believe, that God is *infinitely just*, and that he hates all *injustice*, *oppression*, and *wrong*. Now, if you really believe this of God, you will never suffer yourself to be led, through *covetousness*, *malice* or *revenge*, to injure any man living.

We all profess to believe, that God sees every thing that passes in the world; that the very thoughts of our hearts, our most secret designs, are known to him; and ought not every Christian, who believes this, to *live*, and *act*, as having God the constant witness of his conduct?

Lastly; we have the liberty, through faith, to call, to apply to, this *great*, this *good*, this *just*, this *holy* God, as to a *Father*. A most glorious privilege this, provided we live so as becomes the dutiful children of so *good*, so *great*, so *holy*, a Father; provided we resolve, with those mentioned in the Book of Wisdom, [chap. xv. 2.] "We will not sin, knowing that we are accounted thine." And are we not under the greatest obligations to do so, when, by our own confession, he can reward or punish men beyond what they can conceive?

So that if our faith in God be such as it should be, we should part with any thing, as dear as a *right hand*, or a *right eye*, rather than displease, rather than provoke, this *great*, and *good*, and *holy* God.

We now come to examine *our faith in Jesus Christ;* and that we may see whether our faith be right, by the fruits it produceth.

We profess to believe what Jesus Christ has made known to us,* "That no man can come unto God, but by him;" *He being* THE WAY, THE TRUTH, and THE LIFE; that is, the author of the *way*, the teacher of the *truth*, and the giver of *life*. "That God has given him power over all flesh,"† That, therefore, *as we believe in God, we must believe also in him.* For, that it would be but an uncomfortable article of faith, for a sinner to believe in a God who is holy, just, and powerful, and who hateth all iniquity, if he did not know how to make his peace with him.

We believe, therefore, in Jesus Christ, who took our nature upon him, and has made our peace with God, by suffering, in our stead, what we for our sins had deserved. He has also prevailed with God to accept of our repentance, if sincere; to give us all necessary assistance to do our duty, and to accept of our best endeavours, (instead of a perfect obedience) in order to our being made eternally happy.

Let us now examine our faith upon this article of our Creed, let us consider how our hearts and lives are affected with this

* John xiv. 6. † John xvii. 2

exceeding great love of Christ for his poor creatures. Does this love of Christ, (as the Apostle speaks)* does this love of Christ constrain us? Does it constrain us to consecrate our lives to him, who, by his death, hath redeemed us from eternal death? Does our love for Christ constrain us to take him for our *pattern*, for our *Lord*, our *master*, and *teacher?* If it does, we shall receive his Gospel as the word of our salvation; we shall observe the *laws*, the *rules*, the *ordinances*, which he has given us, as the only means to secure us from perdition. Does our faith, as the same Apostle speaks,† work by love? Does it appear by works of love and charity?

Does the love of Christ constrain us to imitate his sufferings, to take up the cross daily, and follow him, as he requires us to do;‡ that is, to deny our corrupt inclinations; to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts; to resist all inclinations to sin; and to subject our will to the will of God, by steadfastly purposing to do whatever we believe will please him?

Does the love of Christ, and what he has done and suffered for us, constrain us, not to be ashamed of *him*, his *word*, his *humility*, and *sufferings*, in this untoward, unbelieving generation; nor to set a greater value upon the opinion and friendship of men, than upon the friendship of God and Christ?

Will our faith and love constrain us to confess Jesus Christ, to follow his precepts and example, and to suffer for his sake, and to bear witness to the truth of the Gospel, even before those that despise it?

Let us ask ourselves again, Will our love of Christ, and our faith, constrain us, with Moses,§ to look upon the riches, pleasures, and idols of this world, as nothing, in regard of the recompense of reward which Christ hath purchased for us; or, with St. Paul, to count them but lost, that we may win Christ?

Do we, by faith, set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth? Is our conversation such as becomes the Gospel of Christ?‖

If we find, upon examination, that we do indeed love the Lord Jesus Christ, and the laws which he has given us, then we may depend upon it, that we are within the covenant of grace, [mentioned Heb. viii. 10,] by which God has engaged to put his law in our minds, and write it in our hearts, to give us a new heart, and a new spirit.

If the knowledge and belief of these things do not affect our hearts and our lives, it is a sign our faith is not such as it should be, and that our salvation is not much regarded by us. A too sure sign of this is, when we see Christians turning their backs upon that very ordinance, whenever it is administered, which Jesus Christ himself appointed on purpose to keep up the remembrance of what he has done and suffered for us; that our own

*2 Cor iv 14. † Gal. v. 6. ‡ Luke ix. 23. § Heb. xi. 26. ‖ Phil. i. 27

death, whenever it shall happen, may be a comfort to us; and when nothing in this world, nothing but a firm faith in Jesus Christ, can support or comfort our dying spirit.

What we believe concerning the Holy Ghost, to whom, with the Father and the Son we are dedicated in baptism, is this, that he is the cause of all that holiness in Christians, which must fit them for heaven and happiness. And that, as we hope for these, we are every day of our lives to pray for his gracious assistance, his guidance, and blessing. And this we are to do in a more especial manner, that we may continue true members of the Church of Christ; as becomes members of so holy a society; that believing the *forgiveness of sins*, we may never despair of mercy, having so powerful an advocate as Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost to assist us to perfect our repentance. That being by the same Holy Spirit assured of a *resurrection*, we may never forget, that we shall come forth of the grave just as we go into it, either objects of God's wrath, or of his mercy.

How shall we know that we believe these truths as we ought to do; that our faith is such as will save us? Why, as we know a tree—by its fruits.

We profess to believe, that our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost. No man of common sense will *abuse*, or *profane*, or *defile* a church, because he considers it to be a place dedicated to the honour of God. Now, our bodies are more the temples of God, than our churches; they are consecrated to God, to his glory and service, in baptism. And if after this we defile them, by *uncleanness*, by *intemperance*, or by any other base or filthy use, the Holy Ghost will forsake them, and we shall become the temples of Satan.

A Christian, who lives by faith, will make a better use of this temple of the Holy Ghost; he will, in his heart, apply to him upon all occasions, and beg of him to increase his graces, to show him the way in which he should go, to defend him against his spiritual enemies, to make him every day more holy, that he may be capable of being more happy when he dies. He will beg this Holy Spirit to give him a love for, and an understanding of, those Holy Scriptures, which he himself caused to be written for our comfort and salvation. He will beg of him to preserve him a true and living member of that holy Church, out of which, in the ordinary way of providence, there is no salvation. He will give him hearty thanks that he has made him a member of that holy society, where there is a communication of all good things, where we have a share of all the prayers and blessings which God vouchsafes to his Church throughout the whole world. And, because he is sensible of his daily sins and failings, he will pray for the forgiveness of his sins every time he is sensible that he has done amiss. And knowing assuredly, that the same Spirit, which raised up Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead, will raise up our immortal bodies, he will most earnestly and often beg

that good Spirit, that he may lead such a holy life, as that he may die in peace, and rest in hope, and rise in glory.

These are the truths which we profess to believe. That we may not deceive ourselves, let us examine our faith by the fruits it produceth in the ordinary duties of life.

Now, Christians are represented in Scripture, as a people who by faith know God, and the duty they owe to him, as well as the duty they owe to themselves and others, which are all very plainly set down in sacred Scripture. It is impossible to consider this without some melancholy reflections, when one sees too many as ignorant of these things, and as little concerned to know them, as if nothing depended upon them. When one sees people praying for the pardon of their sins, for grace to amend their lives, for deliverance from eternal misery, and for the joys of heaven, with the indifference of people who are not much concerned whether their prayers are heard or not,—when one sees them as fond of the world, as if they were sure never to leave it; or that God had no better inheritance to give them hereafter. Such Christians, to be sure, do not live by faith, nor think that they are in the way of ruin.

Every Christian who lives by faith, must be able to say, I will not, *by the grace of God*, live in any known sin whatever; I will not be careless or indifferent how I lead my life, how I spend my time, how I spend my estate; I will not dishonour God, or my Christian profession, by an idle, useless life; in all my dealings with others, I will set this command of God before my eyes,—*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;* because I know and believe, that this is one of those two commands on which my salvation depends. I will not, therefore, want to be compelled to give every man his due, or not to hurt my neighbour. I will, (will every faithful Christian say,) I will make a conscience of doing the least wrong; of using any deceit or fraud; or of taking advantage of the ignorance or necessities of others. If I have done wrong to any man, I will make him restitution; and, as for such as are my enemies, I will forgive, and love, as becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ.

As to the duty which I owe to myself, I will consider, that the first and great duty is, to take care of my soul; I will, therefore, (saith a Christian who lives by faith,) I will take especial care to mind those rules of the Gospel which are absolutely necessary to fit me for heaven. Such are, *self-denial*, *patience*, *humility*, *purity*, and *charity*, how much soever they are neglected by the generality of Christians, as if they were no longer Christian duties. And as I pray daily that God's will may be done; for myself, I will endeavour to resign my will to the will of God in all the dispensations of his providence. And, forasmuch as the promise of seeing God is made to the pure in heart, I will endeavour to keep my heart from every thing that may defile my soul, and grieve that Holy Spirit by which I have been sealed unto the day of

redemption. Lastly, (will every faithful Christian say,) I will keep a watch over myself, that I may not resist or forget those good purposes which the good Spirit of God puts into my heart.

Such a faith, and such a life as this, it is, Christians, that must recommend us to the favour of God; and to be easy in our minds upon any other terms, is to be in the way of perdition without knowing it. These things we must do, or give up our hope of heaven. For, as sure as God is true, and his word certain, none must go to heaven, but the *good*, the *devout*, the *piously disposed*, the *obedient*, the *sober*, the *chaste*, the *just*, the *honest*, the *religious* Christian.

Let us not then, my Christian brethren, let us not content ourselves with the bare name of Christians, and with shadows of religion and piety, without striving after that holiness without which no man must see the Lord.

You see plainly, that to be a Christian, and a true Christian, are two very different things. A true Christian, knowing that the want of a lively faith is the occasion of all the wickedness we meet with in the world, therefore begs this grace of God, with all the earnestness of his soul; he studies, he attends to, the truths of the Gospel, as that which must make him wise unto salvation: he resolves that what he learns there he will believe, let what will be said against it; that what it requires, he will observe and follow, and avoid what it forbids; never consulting the way of the world, its customs, its favours, or its frowns. By doing which, he secures the favour of God, his grace here, and happiness hereafter.

On the other hand; they that live at all adventures in a general forgetfulness of God, of their duty, and religion, without feeling any thing of its power; such people, under the name of Christians, are in truth unbelievers; and as such will be rejected of God, and will be reserved for a punishment dreadful to be named, however little they consider and think of it.

In short; God has given us a law by which he will judge us. By *faith* we receive this law; and by this we are to judge what our condition is like to be hereafter, whether happy or miserable.

That we may make this judgment impartially, let us consider what our thoughts will probably be when we come to die. Whether, for instance, we shall not be under a most terrible astonishment, when, reflecting upon our faith, and comparing it with our past life, it shall appear that we have lived in a plain neglect of what we profess to believe, and what we knew to be our duty. Or whether, upon comparing our life and our faith, we shall have the comfort of having lived by faith, repented of our errors, made our peace with God, and lived to bring forth fruits answerable to amendment of life.

One of these two will be the case of myself, and of all you that hear me; how soon we know not; but it highly concerns us to

think of it, lest the night come when no man can work before we have finished the work we have to do.

My design, you see, Christians, has been to put you upon considering and examining into the truth of your faith, and the state of your souls. By the short hints which, for the sake of your memory, I am going to give you, you will see who *is*, and who is *not*, in the way of life and salvation.

All such as fear God, and are afraid for themselves, on account of the corruption of their nature;—such as are truly sorry for having offended so gracious a God and Father, and resolve to do so no more; such as receive Jesus Christ as their Lawgiver, Saviour, and Judge; such as strive to be holy in their lives, as God who hath called them is holy; such as do watch, and purpose in their hearts to do nothing knowingly which may displease God;—these have the principles of grace and life in them, and are in the way of life everlasting.

While such as are wilfully ignorant of God, and of the principles and duties of Christianity;—such as are not sensible of the corruption of their nature, and the danger they are in on that account; such as see not, nor are sensible of the blessing of a Redeemer; such as are best pleased with such company and pleasures as divert the thoughts of what must come hereafter; such as live under the means of grace without being bettered by them, whose hearts are set upon the world and its idols;—all these are in the way of certain ruin, though they will not think of it, though they will not believe it.

From all which it appears, how Christians are to judge of the truth and sincerity of their faith, even by the manner of their lives.

If a man fears God, he will be afraid to do any thing which he believes God has forbidden him;—if he loves God, he will desire to please him;—if he believes God to be the Fountain and Giver of all good, he will pray to him for all the good he wants and desires;—if he believes that God ordereth all things with infinite wisdom and goodness, he will be pleased with all God's choices for himself and others.

Let no man, therefore, flatter himself that he is a Christian, who does not do the things which Christ has commanded, and who will not learn, from the example of Christ—from the meekness, humility, patience, and self-denial of Jesus Christ. He who will not be persuaded that this is the only way to be restored to the favour of God, can neither be happy in this world nor in the world to come.

To conclude all that I have to say upon this subject: as Christians, we have the greatest obligations upon us to lead very serious, very holy lives. We are blessed with the true knowledge of God, we have his own Son for our *Master*, and *Teacher*, and *Protector*, and *Saviour*, and *Mediator*, and *Advocate*; we are received into his family by baptism; we have the Holy Ghost to

assist us, and an interest in all the prayers made in his holy church throughout the world; we know and believe that we shall rise again, if we have passed this life of trial as we know we ought to do, we shall rise to enjoy a life of happiness unspeakable and everlasting.

What can our hearts wish for, what can we desire more? Yes, O Jesus! this one thing we desire and beg, that we may all have the grace which thou alone canst obtain for us—that we may have grace to lay the things which we believe most seriously to heart, and that our lives may be answerable to our faith.

Grant this, O Lord, for thy mercy's sake, and for the sake of thy poor creatures, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood; that we may give to Thee, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, glory, and honour, and praise, and thanksgiving, forever and ever. *Amen.*

THE END.

NEW YORK

AN

INVITATION TO PRAYER.

THE spirit of infidelity and irreligion which has manifested it self in our country, aiming to sunder and dissolve the ties which oind society together, and to destroy all the landmarks of moral principle, excites the most painful apprehension; while on the other hand, the successful exertions of religious and benevolent institutions afford a pleasing hope that seasons of promised blessedness are near at hand. In times of difficulty, however, and of danger to his religion, his country, or himself, the duty of the sincere Christian is obvious. The Divine precept is "HONOUR ALL MEN. LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD. FEAR GOD." The true Christian will, therefore, carefully maintain a spirit of unshaken attachment to the faith which is his chief treasure—will discountenance all impiety and disorder, and will promote, to the utmost of his ability, quiet, unity, and a devout reverence for Religion. This is his plain duty. But while he is engaged in the performance of it, his hope will be fixed upon the Lord his GOD; 'who alone can order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men,' and who alone can prosper the endeavours of His servants, by the blessing of His Holy Spirit upon them.

Love for the brotherhood, therefore, no less than the fear of GOD, make it a plain and pressing duty of the Christian, solicitous not only for himself, but for posterity, to attend specially at such a crisis, to the important duty of prayer; and more particularly of prayer for the promised effusion of the Holy Spirit upon all mankind;—that it may please Almighty God to put a stop to the spreading of infidelity, the growth of error, and the abounding of ungodliness; and so to diffuse the light of His glorious gospel, that for all generations, peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established and prevail at home, and be extended to the ends of the earth. And as it is desirable that union of sentiment should prevail in their petitions and some well disposed persons may not be provided with a suitable form, the following Prayer has been written for their use either in private or family worship.

THE PRAYER.*

O MOST MIGHTY GOD, AND MERCIFUL FATHER, regard, we beseech thee, in thine infinite compassion, the supplications of thine unworthy servants, who now approach the throne of thy grace, in the name of Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, our Mediator and Redeemer.

We confess, O Lord, with sorrow and with shame, that we have sinned against thee. We acknowledge and lament that we have broken thy laws, neglected thy gospel, slighted thy mercies, and hardened our hearts against thy judgments; and that while we have been receiving, as a nation, the greatest blessings from thee, the Giver of all goodness, we have been unmindful of thy bounty and regardless of thine honour. To us, O Lord, belongeth confusion of face,—to us, to our rulers, and to our people: but to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, hough we have rebelled against Him. Encouraged, therefore, by thy mercies, we humbly implore thee, for the sake of thy dear Son our Saviour, to forgive us all our national, our family, and our personal transgressions against thee. Remember not, Lord our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers; neither take thou vengeance of our sins; but spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever.

[More especially, we pray thee, to regard, with thine abundant favour, our President, and all others in authority. Endue them with thy Holy Spirit; enrich them with thy heavenly grace. May the Spirit of wisdom and understanding rest upon all who are intrusted with our civil government. Send them help from thy holy place, and evermore mightily defend them. And grant that they may truly and impartially administer justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion and virtue.]

Bless, O Lord, we beseech thee, all ranks and conditions of men amongst us. Pour out upon them the healthful Spirit of

* Should any person find this prayer too long for use at one time, they may omit either of the latter paragraphs, marked thus, [ ] or use them alternately.

thy grace. Deliver us from all sedition and violence, and from discord and enmity. Save us from the gathering together of the froward, and from all the devices of the workers of iniquity. Put to silence the deceitful lips of atheism, infidelity, and irreligion; and show unto them that are in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of godliness. May peace and unanimity speedily prevail amongst us. May true religion flourish and abound. May we be a people fearing God and working righteousness. May we live in dutiful subjection to the civil authority, and in fervent charity one towards another And as thou hast in mercy blessed us with liberty and national prosperity, and hast hitherto preserved us from the judgments which have desolated many other nations of the earth, so continue, we entreat thee, to help and defend us in all our dangers and necessities, that we may not be destroyed by the overflowings of ungodliness, but that when the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord may lift up a standard against him.

But above all, may it please thee, to rule and govern thy Holy Church universal in the right way; and to grant that all who confess thy holy name may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love. Pardon and heal the divisions of thy people. Build up and strengthen the walls of Zion, that the gates of hell may not prevail against it. Send down upon the Bishops and all the Pastors of thy flock, the continual dew of thy blessing. May they all with one heart, and one consent, show forth and defend thy truth, not only in their preaching, but in their lives. May they be enabled truly and faithfully to serve thee, in their life and doctrine, and in the administration of thy holy Sacrament, remembering how great a treasure is committed to their charge, and the solemn account which they must one day give before the tribunal of Christ. May the Spirit of grace and of supplication rest upon them, and upon all thy people everywhere; and hear thou from heaven, thy dwelling place, the prayers they offer up in the name of Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate.

[Finally, let our petitions come up with acceptance before thee, O God, in behalf of all mankind. Be pleased to direct and prosper the endeavours of thy servants for extending the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ. May the word of the Lord have free course and be glorified, that thy way may be known upon earth, and thy saving health among all nations. Hasten, O Lord, thy coming, and thy kingdom; hasten the glory of the latter day

Pour out, O Lord, as thou hast promised, thy spirit upon all flesh; that all the ends of the world may remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations may worship before Him;—that Jerusalem may be a rejoicing, and her people a joy;—that the Gentiles may come to her light, and Kings to the brightness of her rising;—that peace may be extended to her as a river, and the glory of the Gentiles as a flowing stream;—that the Lord of Hosts may reign in Zion, and His name may be great among the Heathen; that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our God, and of His Christ,—so that at the name of Jesus every knee may bow, of things in heaven, of things on earth, and things under the earth: and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD to the glory of GOD the Father.]

Arise, O Lord, help us, and deliver us for thy name's sake. Arise, O Lord, help us and deliver us for thine honour. For thine is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine! Thine is the kingdom, O Lord; and thou art exalted as Head above all!

Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech Thee, in these our imperfect supplications. We do not presume to come before Thee trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hearken and do! Defer not, for Thine own sake, O our God! but do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, for the merits of Thy blessed Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; in whose prevailing name, and perfect form of words, we further call upon Thee, saying,

Our Father who art in heaven, &c.

BISHOP BLOMFIELD'S

MANUAL OF FAMILY PRAYERS;

WITH ALTERATIONS.

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MANUAL OF FAMILY PRAYERS.

SUNDAY MORNING.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful GOD, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, who hast brought us safely to the beginning of this day, give us grace, we beseech thee, that we may now offer, with one accord, our common supplications unto thee; and in compassion to our ignorance, teach us how to pray.

We acknowledge our transgressions, gracious LORD, and our sin is ever before us; make the remembrance of it more grievous to us than it is: and have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for thy Son our LORD JESUS CHRIST's sake.

Make us to be a household fearing thee. Endue us with the grace of thy HOLY SPIRIT, that we may amend our lives according to thy Holy Word, and do everything that is pleasing in thy sight. As our blessed Saviour, who died for our sins, did, as on this day, rise again from the dead, so may we be raised by thy power to newness of life, and daily advance in all virtue and godliness.

O thou who hast been pleased, for thine own glory, and for the benefit of thy creatures, to set apart one day out of seven, to be kept holy to thyself, give us grace, that we may sanctify thy appointment to the honour of thy holy name, and the good of our own souls.

Knowing that thou, LORD, art in heaven, and we, thy sinful creatures, upon earth, may we worship thee this day, with all becoming reverence and submission both of souls and bodies; and fulfil, we pray thee, thy gracious promise, that where two or three are gathered together in thy name, there wilt thou be in the midst of them.

Help us against the infirmities of our nature, and the sins that beset us in our attendance upon thee. Give us grace so to engage in the services of thy Church, that they may be acceptable unto thee, and profitable to our own souls. Bless the instruction which may this day be given to all that profess the name of CHRIST; that it may fall upon serious and faithful hearts, to the strengthening of belief, and the improvement of practice. Incline us to hear thy word with attention, and to receive it with meekness and gladness of heart. Dispose and prepare our souls to receive the full benefit of those holy ordinances which thou hast appointed for our edification and comfort; grant that the effects of our religious exercises on this day may be seen in our Christian behaviour during the remainder of the week; and may each succeeding LORD'S day find us advancing in the great work of our salvation, and better prepared for that eternal rest, which is in store for the faithful servants of thy blessed Son.

O LORD, who art the Father of all mankind, receive also, we beseech thee, our supplications for the universal Church of CHRIST. Pour out thy SPIRIT upon all its members; and bring into its bosom, in thine own good time, all those on whom the light of the Gospel has not yet shined.

And may all who have received the word of salvation, contribute, in their several stations, to promote the glory of thy holy name, and to extend the kingdom of thy dear Son upon earth, by living in Christian holiness, and unity, and godly love.

Accept, we beseech thee, O heavenly Father, this imperfect expression of our wants; and grant unto thy servants whatever is most expedient for them, for the sake of JESUS CHRIST, our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; and the love of GOD; and the fellowship of the HOLY GHOST; be with us all, evermore. *Amen.*

SUNDAY EVENING.

ALMIGHTY GOD and heavenly Father, by whose merciful protection we are brought to the evening of another LORD's day, and are met together to acknowledge thy goodness, and to pray for its continuance, make us, we beseech thee, more sensible of thy mercies and of our own unworthiness; and teach us duly to value and improve the privilege, which thou vouchsafest to us, of drawing nigh unto thee in prayer, through faith in thy blessed Son.

We bless thee for all our opportunities and means of serving thee; that thou hast revealed thyself to us in the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST; that we have been admitted into his Church by baptism; and that we have been born in a land where the true light shineth. Give us grace, we beseech thee, to use these blessings as we ought.

We thank thee, most merciful LORD, that thou hast permitted us this day to attend thee in the courts of thine house, with the offering of prayer and praise. Grant that we may not have gone thither in vain. Pardon all the imperfections of our acts of worship; our coldness of heart, our wandering thoughts, our want of faith. Give us, for the time to come, an unwearied spirit of devotion, and a heart to love and fear thee. Help us to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST; that we may learn to take a lively pleasure in all the duties of religion.

As thou hast graciously promised to hear the petitions of all those who ask in thy Son's name, grant that the things which we have this day asked faithfully, may be obtained effectually, to the relief of our necessities, and to the setting forth of thy glory.

Most merciful GOD, we beseech thee, accept the praises, and return a gracious answer to the prayers, of thy Church, which have been offered up to thee this day. Grant to us, and to all thy people everywhere, that whatever good instruction we have heard, we may carefully remember, and diligently follow. Let the seed of thy word take deep root in the hearts of all thy servants, and bring forth much fruit, to the glory of thy name, and to the credit of our Christian profession.

Whatever holy thoughts and good desires thou hast this day put into any of our hearts, we humbly pray that, by the assistance of thy grace, we may bring the same to good effect. Let the solemn ordinances of religion be made, by thy blessing, the means of increasing amongst us true piety and virtue: grant that all who attend them, may do it with sincerity of mind: and to those who neglect them, be pleased to give repentance and an obedient heart.

Continue to us, and to thy universal Church, the means of grace and salvation; and grant that thy way may be known to all the earth, thy saving health unto all nations.

We desire now to commend ourselves, and all for whom we are in duty bound to pray, to the protection of thy good Providence. Defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; and if it please thee to bring us to the beginning of another day, give us grace to improve it to thy service, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

The grace of our LORD, &c.

MONDAY MORNING.

O GOD, by whom the whole world is governed and preserved, we, thine unworthy creatures, under a thankful sense of thy providential care, draw nigh unto thee to offer our morning sacrifice of prayer and praise.

As thou, LORD, art about our bed, and about our path, and spiest out all our ways; and there is nothing hid from thee—not a thought in our hearts, but thou knowest it altogether; if there

is anything there which offendeth thee, enable us, by thy grace, to discover and cast it out, that we may come before thee with the preparation of a clean heart, and a right mind.

We thank thee that thou hast protected us from all the dangers of the night. Continue thy goodness to us through this day, and preserve us from all dangers both of body and soul. Suffer us not to forget the lessons of holiness, which we were taught on thy day of sacred rest, but dispose us to manifest in our behaviour this day, and during the week, the blessed effects of thy word and means of grace.

We thank thee, O heavenly Father, for all the time which thou hast given us; and acknowledge that we have greatly wasted and misused it. May we do so no more. Make us to remember, that every day is thy gift, and to be used in thy service, and in doing the work of our salvation. O may we have time and grace to finish our appointed task, before the night cometh, in which no work may be done. LORD, spare us yet awhile, that we may be better prepared to meet thee at the last day.

We acknowledge thy numberless mercies, vouchsafed to us, and to all mankind: make us duly thankful for them all; and teach us to show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and right eousness all our days. Enable us to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and dispose us to follow, in all things, the motions of thy good SPIRIT, not trusting to our own strength or wisdom, but looking to thee for grace to establish us in every good word and work

Increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same; that we may continue thine forever, and daily increase in thy HOLY SPIRIT more and more, till we come to thine everlasting kingdom.

Be pleased, O Lord, to receive our humble intercession for all orders and degrees of men; for the President of the United States, and all others in authority, that they may be thy ministers to us for good; for the appointed teachers of thy Word, and pastors of thy flock; and for all the members of thy Church: that all may faithfully serve thee in their several stations, and adorn the doctrine of GOD their Saviour in all things.

We beseech thee, also, have mercy upon all who have not yet known thee. Turn them, O LORD, to the way of life; take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy Word; and save them, together with us, through JESUS CHRIST, our only Mediator and Redeemer. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

The grace of our LORD, *&c.*

MONDAY EVENING.

O LORD Almighty, who art GOD in heaven above, and in the earth beneath, worthy to be praised with all pure and holy praise, what service can we thy sinful creatures offer, which thou wilt be pleased to accept? What is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

O GOD, our maker, preserver, and guide; it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps: we

are not able of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of thee.

We do not presume to call upon thee, O LORD, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies in JESUS CHRIST. We are not worthy so much as to lift up our hands unto thee; but thy property is always to have mercy, and thou hast graciously promised to hear those who ask in thy Son's name. For his sake, be pleased to listen to the prayers of thine unworthy servants.

Pardon, we beseech thee, the sins of which we have this day been guilty; consider the weakness of our nature; and for thy dear Son's sake, be not extreme to mark what is done amiss. We magnify thy goodness, which has so long spared us, and has granted us so much time for repentance: give us grace that we may henceforth turn it to better account.

O LORD, who art good to the unthankful and the evil; although we can never deserve thy mercies, yet teach us to value and to use them as we ought.

Enable us, this night, to shake off worldly cares and desires, and to meditate upon thee; and let thy HOLY SPIRIT be present with us, to purify our hearts, to bring before us the things which concern our peace, and to inspire us with godly resolutions.

Above all things, make us rightly to understand thine infinite mercy in the redemption of mankind by our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and diligently to avail ourselves of all our privileges, as his disciples, and thy children by adoption and grace.

Look down, we beseech thee, with compassion upon all thy afflicted servants; grant them the

comforts of thy HOLY SPIRIT; and in thine own good time visit and relieve them.

Establish thy kingdom in the hearts of men; make the Gospel successful, to the present holiness and eternal welfare of us all: and more particularly, we beg thine abundant blessing upon the Church to which we belong.

O heavenly Father, we commit ourselves to thy holy keeping this night, and desire to rest securely under the shadow of thy protection. Defend us from all perils and dangers, and especially from those which may assault and hurt the soul. Prepare us, by comfortable repose, for the duties of the morrow; and grant that we may rise disposed and strengthened for thy service, as faithful and diligent disciples of thy blessed Son, JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

The grace of our LORD, *&c.*

TUESDAY MORNING.

O GOD, the King eternal and invisible, Maker of the world and all that is therein, worthy art thou to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. In thy hand is our life; and thine are all our ways: we are thine by creation and redemption; not our own, but bought with a price, and joined to thee in an everlasting covenant. Thy mercies fail not, but are new every morning. We are not worthy of the least of them all; but thou hast commanded us to draw nigh unto thee in prayer, and our desire is unto thy name.

Accept, we beseech thee, our morning sacrifice of prayer and praise; and let the lifting up of our hands, and the words of our mouth, be pleasing in thy sight, for JESUS CHRIST's sake.

We praise thee for thy goodness, in having brought us safely to the beginning of another day; for thy preservation of us during our past lives; for all the mercies which thou hast bestowed upon us, notwithstanding our repeated transgressions; but especially for JESUS CHRIST our Saviour, and in Him for all our means of grace and hopes of glory.

That we may value thy goodness as we ought, teach us to know our own unworthiness. We have sinned with our fathers, and done wickedly. But, O LORD, absolve us from our offences; pardon the sinfulness of our corrupt nature, and the transgressions which by our frailty we have committed; and deliver us from the bands of sin, that iniquity may not be our ruin.

Give us grace, that, amidst all our worldly cares and occupations, we may never forget thee, but remember that we are walking in thy sight.

Enable us to subdue all unholy desires, and denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

Preserve us from idleness in the concerns both of our souls and bodies: that we may not be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the LORD.

Dispose us to regard one another with brotherly affection and good will; and enable us to do our duty in that state of life to which thou hast called us, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing thee.

Be pleased, O LORD, to comfort and succour the poor and the afflicted; and dispose us to do good unto all men, under a thankful sense of thy mercies in JESUS CHRIST.

Bless our rulers, especially thy servant the President of the United States; dispose them to act as thy ministers for the good of mankind; and incline us to honour and obey them for thy sake. Spread the knowledge of thy word; and make thy Church the instrument of diffusing and upholding true religion. Preserve us all in the unity of the faith, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life; and finally bring us to thy kingdom in heaven through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

The grace of our LORD, *&c.*

TUESDAY EVENING.

ALMIGHTY GOD, the Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and givest more than either we desire or deserve, we, thine unworthy servants, again draw nigh unto thee, with all humility and thankfulness of heart.

LORD, how precious are thy mercies! how great is the sum of them! and the least of them all is more than we have deserved. Thou art never weary of doing us good, but daily loadest us with thy benefits, even thou, the GOD of our salvation.

We thankfully acknowledge thy great goodness in that thou hast, this day, added to the number of thy mercies by preserving our lives, continuing our comforts, and giving us more

time for repentance. O gracious LORD, we humbly confess that we are still too far from thee, and that we do not esteem thy goodness as we ought, nor apply ourselves duly to thy service. Give us a lively sense of all thy benefits; and renew a right spirit within us. Turn thou us, and so we shall be turned.

We have this day been wanting in many particulars of our duty: we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. Accept our confession, O LORD, and make our repentance sincere.

Both now and ever vouchsafe to hear us, for the sake of thy blessed Son; seeing that we pray to thee as his disciples, with a lively faith in the atonement which he has made for our sins.

Take from us all ignorance, hardness of heart, and too much carefulness about the things of this life; and make us to be a household fearing thee, submitting ourselves to thy holy will and pleasure, putting our whole trust in thy mercy, and studying to please thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives.

Be thou our protection this night, that no evil may befall us, nor any plague come nigh our dwelling.

To thy blessing we commend ourselves, and all that belongs to us, and all for whom we ought to pray. Keep us in peace and safety; grant that we may go to rest in charity with all men.

Keep us, O LORD, if it seem good to thee, in health and safety, to another day; and give us grace to employ it to thy honour in the work of our salvation. And whenever thou shalt be pleased to end our term of days, and to call us

out of this mortal state, grant that our peace may be made with thee through our LORD JESUS CHRIST; and at the last day, raise us from the sleep of death to the resurrection of eternal life, through Him who died and rose again for us, the same JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

The grace of our LORD, &c.

WEDNESDAY MORNING.

O GOD, thou art our GOD; early will we seek thee. Thou art good and doest good to all; thy mercy is over all thy works. Thou madest us, and not we ourselves; we are thy people and the sheep of thy pasture; we therefore worship and fall down and kneel before the LORD our Maker. Unworthy as we are to offer unto thee any sacrifice, thou hast appointed unto us a great High Priest, in whose name we come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find mercy, and grace to help us in the time of need.

Grant that the frequency and earnestness of our prayers may be proportioned to the greatness of our wants. Make us to rejoice in every opportunity of worshipping thy divine Majesty, and preserve us from the sin of drawing near to thee with our lips, while our hearts are far from thee.

We humbly thank thee, O LORD, that thou hast preserved us the night past, and renewest unto us thy goodness this morning. Take us again into thy guidance and protection during the day; and so govern us by thy grace, that we may neither think, speak, nor do, any thing which may displease thee, or wound our own souls. Assist us to be sincere and hearty

in dedicating ourselves, our souls and bodies, to thy service. Preserve us from the power of evil; from the temptations incident to our respective callings; from the lusts of the flesh, and the vanities of a wicked world.

Send thy good SPIRIT to direct and guide us in the ways and works of godliness. Purify our affections; enliven our devotion; and teach us how to pray, and how to hear, and read, and profit by, thy holy Word. Make us Christians in heart, and in hope, and not only in name. Teach us the value of our souls, and of the salvation which has been wrought for them by thy Son CHRIST JESUS. May we never be ashamed of confessing him before men; but amidst all discouragements and difficulties, give us boldness to show ourselves his true disciples.

Let our conversation be such as becometh his Gospel; and whatsoever we do in word or in deed, let us do all in his name, giving thanks to GOD and the Father through him. And let the words of our mouth and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, our Strength and our Redeemer.

Give us grace, we beseech thee, that we may be just and honest in all our dealings; kind and charitable towards all men; sober, temperate, and chaste; and more particularly, careful of the duties which we owe to one another, as members of a Christian family: that having, by thy grace been kept this day without wilful sin, we may, at the close of it, lie down to rest, with the answer of a good conscience towards GOD; and with a sure trust in the merits of our Saviour JESUS CHRIST. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

The grace of our LORD, *&c.*

WEDNESDAY EVENING.

O most holy and merciful Lord God, the fountain of all goodness, wisdom, and strength; we pray thee, look down, from heaven thy dwelling-place, upon us thine unworthy servants, who desire to renew our praises and prayers to thy divine majesty.

We confess, that notwithstanding thy gracious dealings towards us, we have neither loved thee, served thee, nor obeyed thee, as we ought to have done.

We have been too much taken up with the cares and concerns of this life, and too negligent in the great work of our salvation. O gracious Lord, have compassion on our infirmities, and for thy dear Son's sake, turn from us all those evils that we most justly have deserved. Grant that neither the sins of this day, nor any of the transgressions of our past life, may ever be had in remembrance before thee. Look upon us, O Lord, as reconciled unto thee in Jesus Christ; and grant to us, for the time to come, the aid of thy Holy Spirit, that we may walk as becometh those who have been redeemed of the Lord.

Let not sin reign in our mortal bodies, nor vain desires take possession of our hearts; but by the efficacy of thy grace destroy in us all evil habits, and all unholy wishes.

Convince us, we pray thee, of the shortness and uncertainty of this life; that we may always be in a state of preparation and watchfulness, as servants who wait for the coming of their Lord.

Give us grace that we may be daily more and more sensible of the vanity of all worldly objects

of desire; and more intent upon laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven.

May we never slight thy warnings, nor neglect the opportunities which thou affordest us. Make us to love thy Holy Word; enlighten our understanding to receive, and purify our affections to hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

Receive, we beseech thee, our intercessions for all mankind, especially for our relations, friends, and neighbours; bring them all to the knowledge and practice of thy law; grant unto them all things needful both for their souls and bodies.

Make this nation, O LORD, to be a people serving thee.

Root out from among us all ungodliness, all uncharitableness, all indifference to religion; that we may be indeed thy people, and thou mayest be our GOD.

Bless and protect thy servant the President of the United States, and all others in authority; that under them this nation may be godly and quietly governed.

Pity the afflicted and distressed in mind, body, and estate; and mercifully relieve them, as may be most conducive to thy glory, and to their eternal good.

To these, our prayers and intercessions, we desire to add our unfeigned thanksgivings for all the benefits which thou hast conferred upon us; for all the blessings which we have enjoyed from our youth up until now; particularly for the mercies and comforts of the day past; but above all, for our redemption by our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Be pleased to continue thy protection to us through this night. Refresh our bodies with quiet sleep, and our souls with the consolations of thy HOLY SPIRIT; and when thou shalt call us out of this world, give us everlasting rest and peace in thy eternal kingdom, through the merits of our Redeemer JESUS CHRIST. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

The grace of our LORD, &c.

THURSDAY MORNING.

ALMIGHTY GOD, Maker of all things, Father of all mankind, receive our morning tribute of prayer and praise. We are thine; and are bound to honour and serve thee, as the creatures of thy hand, and as the disciples of thy blessed Son.

We acknowledge that it is thou alone who hast preserved us unto this day; and that through thy mercy alone, we have this opportunity of magnifying and praising thy holy name.

We bless thee for the returning light; and if our souls have contracted aught of evil during the night-season, cleanse them, we beseech thee, by thy HOLY SPIRIT, and dispose them to thy service.

We confess that we have sinned against thee, and done much evil in thy sight; neither have we obeyed thy law with perfectness of heart.

O LORD, who knowest the weakness of our nature, have compassion upon our infirmities, and forgive us all our sins, for JESUS CHRIST'S sake.

Lift up the light of thy countenance upon us; speak peace unto thy people; and let them not turn again unto folly: but send them grace to preserve them from the power of sin.

Enable us this day to fulfil the duties of our respective callings with truth and diligence; that when we again meet together, our consciences may not reproach us with having broken any of thy commandments.

Grant that we may this day be set forward in our Christian course; that we may be more able to resist temptation, more mindful of thy presence, more desirous of thy grace.

To this end, open thou our eyes, that we may see the wondrous things of thy law; give us understanding, that we may know thy testimonies; and write the words of thy Gospel in our hearts.

Bless all our honest endeavours; make us content with what thy providence shall order for us; and grant that no worldly business or pleasures may divert us from the thoughts of the life to come.

Make us duly thankful for all thy mercies, and mindful of the wants of others; tender-hearted and compassionate; forgiving others, even as thou, LORD, for CHRIST's sake, hast promised to forgive us.

May it please thee to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts.

Be merciful unto all men: convert the sinful, strengthen the weak-hearted, raise up those who fall, and finally beat down Satan under our feet.

We humbly thank thee, O heavenly Father, for the continuance of thy mercies; for all the good gifts which thou hast bestowed upon us: for our life, our senses, our worldly substance, our means and opportunities of grace.

But above all, we desire to praise thee for thy blessed Son, and for the redemption which He has wrought; and we beseech thee to accept

these imperfect petitions for the sake of that great Mediator and Intercessor, JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

The grace of our LORD, *&c.*

THURSDAY EVENING.

O ALMIGHTY and everlasting GOD, who art exalted far above all blessing and praise, and yet humblest thyself to hear the prayers of thine unworthy servants, be present, we beseech thee, with us, who are now met together in thy name.

As another day is taken from the sum of our lives, give us grace to remember that we are so much nearer to our latter end; and fill us with true repentance for all the sins and follies of our past lives.

Grant that the opportunities which may yet be vouchsafed to us, may be improved by us to the purposes of our Christian calling: make us day by day more serious, diligent, and devout.

By all the dispensations of thy providence, whether of good or evil, bring us nearer to thyself; and make us thine, through JESUS CHRIST, in heart and affections, as we are by name and in profession.

Quicken us in the pursuit of heavenly things, and make us faithful in the discharge of every appointed duty; serving thee with sincerity of heart, and doing to all men as we would they should do unto us.

Subdue in us, by the power of thy grace, every evil affection; and make our conversation to be such as becometh the people of the LORD.

Direct, sanctify, and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments.

Let neither pleasure, profit, anger, nor fear, make us forget the very least of thy commandments; but increase in us more and more all the Christian graces and virtues.

Receive our humble prayers for all conditions of men: grant that all who confess thy holy name, may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love.

We beseech thee, show forth the power of thy grace, by enlightening those that are in darkness, and by converting those that are in sin.

Endue all orders and degrees of men amongst us, with those virtues which may most conduce to thy honour and glory, and to the good of thy Church and people.

We commend to thy fatherly goodness all our relations and friends; beseeching thee to take them and us into thy holy keeping this night, and to prepare us, both in soul and body, to serve thee faithfully another day.

Grant that we may go to rest this night in charity with all men; and give us time and grace to make our peace with thee, through JESUS CHRIST, before we go hence and be no more seen.

Hear us, O LORD, and graciously answer us, for the sake of thy dear Son, JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

The grace of our LORD, *&c.*

FRIDAY MORNING.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who formest the spirit of man within him, and fittest him to serve and worship thee; we are thy servants and children, the work of thy hand. Our praise shall be continually of thee, who hast holden us up ever since we were born.

We acknowledge that we are not worthy to lift up our hands unto thee; we have sinned and done amiss: our transgressions are more in number than the hairs of our head; they are a heavy burden upon our souls. We have sinned against light and knowledge; against mercies and warnings; against providences, and opportunities of good. We desire not to justify ourselves, but to confess before thee that we are unclean.

O LORD, enter not into judgment with thy servants; but spare thy people whom thou hast redeemed: for the glory of thy name, and for the sake of thy blessed Son, deliver us, and be merciful unto us.

Cast us not away from thy presence; and take not thy HOLY SPIRIT from us: but remember us, for CHRIST's sake, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people, and visit us with thy salvation.

O thou, without whose help we can do no good thing; make us to feel our own infirmity, and the comforts of thy grace. Bear us up by the strength of faith, and by the power of love and hope, above all the temptations which may assault us; that we may keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

Let thy blessing be upon us this day, that we may do nothing but what we know to be pleasing to thee: enable us to avoid all occasions of sin; and when we fall into temptation, make a way for us to escape.

Grant to us severally such measures of thy grace, as may fit us for the duties of our respective stations. Make us humble to our superiors, friendly towards our equals, kind and considerate to the poor and needy, charitable and forgiving towards those who do us wrong.

Make us to take delight in the work of prayer and praise; in all the ordinances of religion; and especially in partaking spiritually of the body and blood of CHRIST our Saviour; and grant that we may excite others, by our good example, to glorify thee, our heavenly Father.

Hearken, O LORD, to our humble intercessions for the whole race of mankind. Have mercy upon all unbelievers, and bring them home to thy flock. Make sinners to see the error of their ways, and turn them to thyself. Preserve the Church in unity and peace; instruct the ministers and stewards of thy word and sacraments; and enable them, both by their preaching and living, to show forth the power of the Gospel.

Assist the afflicted and distressed; giving them patience under their suffering; and when thou seest fit, a happy deliverance from all their troubles.

O LORD, who knowest all our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking; forgive, we beseech thee, the imperfections of these our prayers, and graciously accept them for the sake of JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

The grace of our LORD, &c.

FRIDAY EVENING.

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most Highest; to tell of thy loving kindness early in the morning, and of thy truth in the night-season

Hearken unto the voice of our calling, O LORD, our Creator and Preserver: for unto thee do we make our prayer.

We come before thee, O heavenly Father, with all humility of heart, as sinful and unworthy creatures, less than the least of all thy mercies. We have all sinned and come short of thy glory: but thou art gracious and long-suffering, and hast compassion upon the infirmity of thy servants, for thy dear Son's sake.

Be present, we beseech thee, by thy HOLY SPIRIT, with us who are met together in thy Son's name; and dispose us to serious recollection, and to earnest prayer.

Make us deeply sensible of our sins, and especially of those which we have this day committed; and so quicken our repentance, and strengthen our faith in the atoning blood of CHRIST, that we may be cleansed from all sin, and be at peace with thee.

Awaken us, O LORD, from spiritual insensibility, and bring us to a lively sense of our condition here, and of the value of our calling in JESUS CHRIST. Enable us, by thy grace, to have our conversation in heaven, and diligently to seek those things which are above.

Make us always mindful of our own frailty, of the shortness and uncertainty of this life, of the eternity of that which is to come, of the unspeakable joys of heaven, and of the dreadful

punishment of hell; that we may be of the number of those who strive to enter in at the strait gate, and by thy gracious assistance, find it.

We bless thy holy name for all the mercies which thou hast bestowed upon us: for our life, health, and reason; and for all the faculties both of our souls and bodies: grant that we may use and improve them to thy glory.

We bless thee that we were born of Christian parents; we thank thee for all the privileges and hopes of the Christian covenant: give us grace to use all diligence, that we may make our calling and election sure.

We bless thee for thy patient forbearance towards us, notwithstanding our repeated sins; for thy preservation of us from numberless dangers; for the bountiful goodness of thy providence, and for all the blessings of this life.

But above all, we adore thy tender love and compassion to us, and to all mankind, in the redemption of the world, by our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, who humbled himself, even to death upon the cross, for us miserable sinners, that he might make us thy children, and exalt us unto everlasting life.

We also bless thee for all the means of grace which thou hast given us in thy word and sacraments, and in the worship and ordinances of thy Church.

Grant that we may so esteem and profit by these and all thy mercies, that having been faithful and diligent servants of our LORD, we may finally receive that crown of glory which thou hast promised to those who love thee, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

The grace of our LORD, &c.

SATURDAY MORNING.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who, for our many sins committed against thee, mightest most justly have cut us off in the midst of our days, we humbly thank thee, that in the multitude of thy mercies thou hast hitherto spared us.

Accept, we beseech thee, our unfeigned sorrow for our past transgressions; and grant that we may never so presume upon thy mercy, as to despise the riches of thy goodness: but let a sense of thy forbearance and long-suffering work in us repentance and amendment of life, to thy honour and glory, and to our acceptance in the last day, through the merits of our Saviour CHRIST.

Keep alive in us, O LORD, a true spirit of devotion; and preserve us from the great sin of praying to thee with our lips only, and not with our hearts and minds.

Convince us of our entire dependence upon thee; quicken us in the pursuit of things eternal; that we may continually press forward to obtain the prize of our high calling in CHRIST JESUS.

Thou LORD, who knowest the dangers which beset us in this present world; strengthen us by thy power against the enemies of our salvation: hold thou us up, and we shall be safe.

Dispose us, we beseech thee, rightly to discharge the duties of this day. Watch over our paths; compass us about with thy favour; preserve us in our going out and coming in; and direct all our steps in the way of thy commandments.

Make us truly honest and conscientious in all our dealings; diligent in the works of our calling; innocent in our conversation; meek, charitable, and forgiving towards others; watchful over ourselves, and ever mindful of thy presence.

Sanctify to us our crosses and afflictions, if it be thy good pleasure to afflict us: and give us such a measure of patience and godly resolution, that we may be willing to take up our cross daily, and to follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth

O Lord, grant that this family and household may abound more and more in love for thee, and in devotion to thy service: that it may be, amongst many others, the humble means of keeping alive a spirit of piety in this nation, that thou mayest bless them, and visit them with thy salvation.

Have mercy upon thy whole Church; more especially that portion of it to which we belong. Pour out the graces of thy Spirit upon all its members, that, if possible, it may be presented unto thee, through Jesus Christ, without blemish and without spot.

O Lord, if we have now asked any thing amiss, we pray thee pardon our ignorance and infirmity; and whatever is good for us, even if we ask it not, be pleased to grant to us, in the name and for the sake of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

The grace of our Lord, &c.

SATURDAY EVENING.

ALMIGHTY and mostgracious GOD and Father who art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all who call upon thee; have respect unto the prayers of thy servants; hear thou in heaven, thy dwelling-place, and when thou hearest, forgive, for JESUS CHRIST's sake.

Help us to approach thee at all times with reverence and godly fear; and at this time assist our prayers that we make before thee, with one accord, as believers in thy blessed Son.

We adore thy goodness, O LORD, that thou hast given him to be a ransom for our sins; to suffer death upon the cross, the just for the unjust, to bring us nearer unto thee. Give us grace to remember, that He has purchased us unto himself for a peculiar people, zealous of good works; that we may walk worthy of our calling, and adorn the doctrine of GOD our Saviour in all things.

Grant that we may not be insensible to the blessings of the Christian covenant; nor neglectful of the means of grace; nor blind to thy mercies vouchsafed to us in the whole course of our lives. It is by thy grace alone that we have been kept back from the greatest sins, and enabled to do the least good: make us duly thankful for all the spiritual benefits which we enjoy.

Enlighten us to discern thy providence in all that befalls us; in sickness and in health, in riches and in poverty, in tribulation and in joy.

During the past week we have had many occasions to be thankful for thy fatherly kindness

and forbearance: grant that the next may be spent in thy service, and in doing the works of our calling; not in sinful nor in vain pursuits. More especially, prepare us for the duties of the LORD's day; that we may sanctify it by a holy rest, ceasing from worldly cares and pleasures, and giving up ourselves to thy service, and to the improvement of our spiritual state.

Make us sensible of our uncertain condition in this life; and teach us so to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Let each night remind us of the sleep of death; that we may live in continual preparation for our change, and be ready to lay aside the burthen of the flesh, when our appointed time shall come.

O LORD, be pleased to bless not only this family, but all mankind. Establish thy kingdom upon earth; and grant that the Church of CHRIST may be strengthened in this nation, and that thy blessing and favour may rest upon it.

We beseech thee to preserve and bless thy servant, the President of the United States, and all others in authority; that they, remembering whose ministers they are, may in all things seek thy honour and glory; and that we may cheerfully obey them in thee, and for thee, according to thy blessed word and ordinance.

Give grace to the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries, that they may persuade men to enter into the true fold, to fear and love thee, and to trust in JESUS CHRIST: and that they themselves may set forth the doctrines of the Gospel, not only with their lips, but in their lives.

O Father of mercies, relieve, with thy comforts, the sick and afflicted; and do for all

thy servants more than they know how to ask, for the sake of thy dear Son our Saviour JESUS CHRIST. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

The grace of our LORD, &c.

OCCASIONAL PRAYERS.

A PRAYER

To be added when any member of the Family is sick.

O LORD ALMIGHTY, who givest to thy creatures health and strength, and when thou seest fit, visitest them with sickness and infirmity, be pleased to hear the prayers which we offer in behalf of *him* who is now afflicted by thy hand. Look down from heaven, behold, visit, and in thine own good time relieve *him*. Bless the means used for *his* recovery; and dispose *him* to place all his trust and confidence in thee, not in the help of man. Be merciful unto *him*, gracious LORD, not according to *his* deservings, but according to the necessity of *his* case, and according to the multitude of thy mercies in JESUS CHRIST. In submission to thy most wise and good disposal of all things, we beseech thee that this bitter cup may pass away from thy servant: but if that may not be, give *him* grace to improve it to the good of *his* soul, and set *him* forward on *his* way to life eternal, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

A THANKSGIVING

To be added when any member of the Family has recovered from sickness.

WE humbly thank thee, O gracious and merciful LORD that thou hast heard the prayers of thy servant, who was lately brought low by the visitation of sickness, and raised

him up from the gates of the grave; that thou hast delivered *his* soul from death, *his* eyes from tears, and *his* feet from falling. O LORD, let it be good for *him* that *he* has been afflicted; teach *him* and us the uncertainty of this life, and give us grace to fix our hopes upon thy promises of a better, through JESUS CHRIST our Saviour. *Amen.*

A PRAYER

To be added, when any affliction has befallen one of the Family.

O ALMIGHTY and most just GOD, who orderest all the events of this uncertain life, righteous art thou in all thy dealings, and holy in all thy ways. Give us grace contentedly to bear whatsoever burthens thou seest fit to lay upon any of us, assured that all things work together for good to them that love thee, and seek thee through JESUS CHRIST.

Be gracious, O LORD, to thy afflicted servants; comfort the mourners, and impart to them the consolations of thy SPIRIT.

Give us grace to make a profitable use of this, and all thy dispensations. Make us to remember that this world is not our abiding place; that our life is but a vapour, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone. Spare us yet little; and teach us so to number our days, and to apply our hearts unto wisdom, that we may finally pass to the reward which thou hast promised to the faithful followers of thy Son, JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

A PRAYER

To be added on the mornings of those days upon which the Sacrament of the LORD'S *Supper is to be administered.*

ALMIGHTY GOD, whose blessed Son JESUS CHRIST, for the forgiveness of our sins, did suffer death upon the cross,

prepare us, we beseech thee, by thy grace, for the worthy celebration of that holy ordinance, which He was pleased to appoint for a continual remembrance of his death, for a pledge of his love, and for a sign and means of grace, to our great and endless comfort. Make us to discern the LORD's body; and to remember and adore the exceeding love of CHRIST our Saviour, thus dying for us. Give us repentance unto life not to be repented of. Endue us with a lively faith, a perfect love, and an universal charity. Enable us spiritually to receive the body and blood of CHRIST our Saviour; that so all sinful affections may die in us, and that all things belonging to the SPIRIT may live and grow in us; and that, being continually refreshed and strengthened by thy grace, we may persevere in all godliness unto our lives' end, and finally receive an everlasting recompense, through the merits of our Redeemer, JESUS CHRIST. *Amen.*

A PRAYER

To be used when any Child in the Family has been baptized.

ALMIGHTY GOD, through whose gracious favour a member of this family has this day been admitted, by baptism into the Church of CHRIST, called into a state of salvation, and made thy child by adoption and grace; grant, we beseech thee, that by the continual help of thy HOLY SPIRIT, *he* may be enabled to lead the rest of *his* life according to this beginning; walking uprightly before thee in the true faith of CHRIST crucified, and in the sincere practice of those things which thou hast commanded; that finally, through the merits of *his* Redeemer, *he* may be saved from the wrath to come, and enter into thy Church in heaven. Grant this, we beseech thee, most merciful Father, for JESUS CHRIST's sake. *Amen.*

A PRAYER

To be used on the morning of New-Year's Day.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who art the LORD of life and death, who appointest to every man his portion of days, to be spent in doing the work of his Christian calling; we bless and praise thy holy name, and acknowledge thy goodness in having brought us safe to the beginning of another year.

O LORD, when thou art angry, all our days are gone; we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told. How great is thy mercy, that notwithstanding our neglect and abuse of the opportunities and seasons which have been granted to us, thou hast yet spared us for a time, and hast given us a further space for repentance!

Make us truly sensible of thy mercy, most merciful GOD; and give us grace to consider, that another year of our uncertain life is passed away; and that we are so much nearer to judgment. Let us, in good earnest, set about the work of preparation for death, that when the LORD cometh, he may find us watching.

If it please thee to spare us yet another year, make us diligent and careful to redeem our time, and to spend it in thy service; that at the end of it, and at the great day of account, we may not be found to have wasted or misused a precious talent.

O LORD, from whom cometh every good disposition of our hearts, as well as the lengthening of our days; be pleased to make us wise unto salvation; that we may consider, while it is yet day, the things that belong unto our peace; and that we may, by the help of thy HOLY SPIRIT, pass this year, and all the years we have yet to live, in the comfortable hope of a blessed eternity, for the sake of JESUS CHRIST our LORD and Saviour. *Amen.*

SOME SHORT DEVOTIONAL FORMS,

Which may be used with any of the preceding Prayers

Whom have we in heaven but thee, O LORD? there is none on earth that we desire besides thee. Thou art our GOD, and we will thank thee: thou art our GOD, and we will serve thee. Be thou our ruler and guide.

O gracious LORD, withhold not from thy servants any of the gifts and graces of thy SPIRIT; and as for the things of this world, dispense them to us in such measure, as may best contribute to thy honour, and to our eternal welfare.

O LORD, give us sincerity of heart to confess our sins before thee, a deep sense of our own weakness and want of grace, and a steadfast resolution to forsake and avoid every thing which thou hast forbidden.

We implore thy pardon, not for our own sake, but for the sake of thy blessed Son; we plead thy gracious promises in CHRIST JESUS; we earnestly seek for the comforts of thy grace.

This is the confidence we have in GOD, *that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.* (1 St. John v. 14.) LORD, may it be with thy servants according to this word!

May the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the LORD and of his CHRIST; and may all that own thee for their King, become thy faithful subjects, and obey thy laws.

Unto thee, O LORD, who art able to do for us abundantly more than we can ask or think, be glory in the Church, by CHRIST JESUS, throughout all ages, world without end.

To GOD only wise, be glory, through CHRIST JESUS, for ever and ever.

Grant, O LORD, unto all who are afflicted, that they may search out their ways, and see whence their visitation cometh.

Preserve, we beseech thee, O LORD, thy Church from all

dangerous errors, from divisions, from indifference, and from uncharitableness.

Lord, without whom the frailty of man cannot but fall; we beseech thee to succour us in all temptations, that no sin may ever get the dominion over us.

Who can understand his errors? O cleanse thou us from our secret faults.

O Lord, glorify thyself by the salvation of our souls deliver us, thy servants, from the bondage of sin, and gather us to the number of thine own.

For thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto our sin; for it is great. Show thy servants the light of thy countenance, and save us, for thy mercy's sake.

Godliness is great riches, if a man be content with that he hath.

Blessed Jesus, support thy poor members under all their troubles, and sanctify their bodily wants to the improvement of their souls' health.

O Lord, the protector of all those who fear thee, set thy saving mark upon this house: and let not the destroyer have power to hurt us.

Almighty Father, finish the work of mercy which thou hast begun in us; make us thine through Jesus Christ, and preserve us unto the end.

Protect and keep us in the midst of this deceitful world, and direct us in the way to life eternal, through Jesus Christ.

O Holy Spirit of grace, help our infirmities; restrain our wandering thoughts; fix them upon our duty: make us serious and thoughtful at all times, but especially when we attend upon God.

O gracious God, make us to be steadfast, unmoveable always abounding in the work of the Lord, that our labour may not be in vain in the Lord. *No.* 34.

No. 186.

THE PSALMS:

A

CHRISTIAN MANUAL.

["What is e'en now the Christian's song of praise,
The storehouse of his prayers, the saint's delight,
The counsellor and guardian of his ways,
The pilgrim's staff and lantern through the night?
The armory of holy thought?
'Tis Israel's Psalm-book sweet, by inspiration wrought."

The Baptistery,—"The Spiritual Husbandman."]

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1846.

the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed."*—That He should die: "*Thou shalt bring me into the dust of death.*"†—That His death should be on the cross: "*They pierced my hands and my feet.*"‡—That He should lie in the grave, descend into hell, and rise again: "*I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest.*"§ For "*Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.*"‖—That He should ascend into heaven: "*God is gone up with a merry noise, and the Lord with the sound of the trump.*"¶ "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in.*"**—And, lastly, that he shall come again to judge the quick (*i. e.* the living) and the dead: "*God is Judge Himself.*"†† "*God standeth in the congregation of princes, He is a Judge among gods.*"‡‡—In this manner, then, you see the life of the blessed Jesus is drawn out for us in the Psalms.

Here too, in these sacred songs, besides those great truths which I have mentioned, we find the other great mysteries of the Christian faith. Thus, for example, we find the awful doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity in this verse: "*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of His mouth.*"§§ "*The Word,*" we know from St. John,‖‖ is our Lord and Saviour; and "*the breath*" of God's mouth is His Spirit.¶¶ Again, in this verse: "*With Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light shall we see light.*"*** The "*well of life,*" or "*living water,*" is the figure under which our Saviour spake of the Holy Ghost,††† while He Himself is "*the true light;*"‡‡‡ and then there is God the Father, with whom the Light and Life are. Or, to take another example, we have in the Psalms the true doctrine of the Holy Sacraments: "*Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*"§§§ Here is Holy Baptism; and the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper we find in "*Bread to strengthen man's*

* Ps. ii. 2. † Ps. xxii. 15. ‡ Ps. xxii. 17. § Ps. iv. 9.
‖ Ps. xvi. 11. ¶ Ps. xlvii. 5. ** Ps. xxiv. 7—10.
†† Ps. l. 6. ‡‡ Ps. lxxxii. 1. §§ Ps. xxxiii. 6. ‖‖ John i. 1
¶¶ Job xxvi. 13. *** Ps. xxxvi. 9. ††† St. John vii. 38, 39.
‡‡‡ St. John i. 9. §§§ Ps. li. 2, 7.

heart, and wine to make it glad;"* that wine which is "*the cup of salvation.*"†

Or, to view the Psalms in another light, we may regard them not only as teaching the faith, but as giving the true and proper rules of life. Thus we are warned to keep chastity, for God "*has destroyed all them that commit fornication against Him.*"‡ Not to envy evil men, however great: "*Neither be thou envious against evil doers,*"§ for this reason, their power is all nothing. "*I went by, and lo, he was gone; I sought him, but his place could no where be found.*"‖ We are taught that lowliness of mind is a good: "*Lord, I am not high-minded, I have no proud looks.*"¶ And again, we learn that pity is a praiseworthy thing: "*The good man is merciful, and lendeth;*"** and farther, that we should ever be exercised in giving alms; for that will bring a blessing to us: "*He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor:*" and, "*his righteousness remaineth for ever.*"†† They instruct us also in the duties of fasting and humiliation: "*I put on,*" says holy David, "*sackcloth, and humbled my soul with fasting.*"‡‡ And of prayer and praise: "*In the evening, and morning, and at noon-day will I pray.*"§§ "*Seven times a day do I praise Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments.*"‖‖— And so on as regards every grace and virtue.¶¶

Once more, to regard this holy book in yet another light; we shall see, if we look carefully into it, that it is full of instruction to us as regards earthly and created things. I mean in this way, for example: we might ask, whence are our bodies made? David tells us, God "*remembereth that we are but dust.*"***— In what way are the mountains of use? "*The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, and so are the stony rocks for the conies.*"††† How are the animals fed? "*These wait all upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them meat in due season.*"‡‡‡ The heavens are great and high, because they "*declare the glory of*

* Ps. civ. 15. † Ps. cxvi. 12. ‡ Ps. lxxiii. 26.
§ Ps. xxxvii. 1. ‖ Ps. xxxvii. 37. ¶ Ps. cxxxi. 1.
** Ps. cxii. 5. †† Ps. cxii. 9. ‡‡ Ps. xxxv. 13
§§ Ps. lv. 18. ‖‖ Ps. cxix. 164.
¶¶ See this thought followed out more fully by St. Chrysostom, Hom ix. on Ep. to Colossians.
*** Ps. ciii. 14. ††† Ps. civ. 18. ‡‡‡ Ps. civ. 27

God;"* but yet they shall pass away with all things else, for "*they shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.*"† And thus, as said St. Chrysostom, "the sweet singer of Israel will tell thee both of things present and things to come, of things seen, and of the invisible things of God."‡

There is, however, one peculiarity which these holy songs have, beyond the other parts of sacred Scripture, which I will here mention. The other books of the Holy Bible, by God's mercy, teach us what we ought to do to please God; but the Psalms not only teach us this, but also *how* we are to obey God and keep His commandments. For example, St. Paul says: "*We glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed.*"§ But David, by his example and in his Psalms, shows how tribulations (that is, sorrow and trouble) are to be borne: "*I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my calling;*"‖ and how each man may try, and prove himself, whether troubles are working patience in him: "*Before I was troubled, I went wrong; but now have I kept Thy word.*" "*It is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I may learn Thy statutes;*"¶ and also what words are suitable for those who have hope in God, to express that hope as Christians ought to express it: "*The Lord is my light, and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?*"** Again, to take another example, we are commanded to give thanks always for all things, and how can we do so better than in the wonderful words of the Psalmist?—"*I will magnify Thee, O Lord, my King, and I will praise Thy name for ever and ever.*"†† "*Praise the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise His holy name.*"‡‡ And again: when we are in penitence and sorrow, which is so earnestly enjoined upon us who have fallen

* Ps. xix. 1.
† Ps. cii. 26, 27.
‡ See Hom. xxviii. on Ep. to Romans
§ Rom. v. 3, 4, 5
‖ Ps. xl. 1.
¶ Ps. cxix. 67, 71.
** Ps. xxvii. 1
†† Ps. cxlv. 1.
‡‡ Ps. ciii. 1.

from our baptismal purity, where shall we find words wherewith to approach our Saviour, more fitting for us than the 51st Psalm: that Psalm wherein David expressed his deep sorrow for his past sins? "*Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness: according to the multitude of Thy mercies do away mine offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin; for I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever before me:*"—and so on through the whole Psalm. Or, to give one instance more of the way in which this divine book helps us to obey God's commands, we are told, as you may remember, to be "*instant in prayer;*"* to be "*praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.*"† Now the Psalms are, as it were, the Spirit's prayers, for they were all written by God's Holy Spirit; and in them we shall find prayers, not only for ourselves, but for all God's Church, and that under all the changes and chances of this mortal life.

For ourselves we may pray daily in the words of the 25th Psalm: "*Show me Thy ways, O Lord, and teach me Thy paths. Lead me forth in Thy truth, and learn me; for Thou art the God of my salvation; in Thee hath been my hope all the day long. Call to remembrance, O Lord, Thy tender mercies and Thy loving-kindnesses, which have been ever of old. O remember not the sins and offences of my youth; but according to Thy mercy think Thou upon me, O Lord, for Thy goodness.*"‡ In like manner for God's Church: "*Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou madest room for it; and when it had taken root it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedar-trees. She stretched out her branches to the sea, and her boughs unto the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedge, that all they that go by pluck off her grapes? The wild boar out of the wood doth root it up, and the wild beasts of the field devour it. Turn Thee again, Thou God of hosts, look down from heaven; behold, and visit this vine; and the place of the vineyard that Thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that Thou madest so strong for Thyself.*"§

* Rom. xii. 12.
† Eph. vi. 18.
‡ Ps. xxv. 3, 4, 5, 6.
§ Ps. lxxx. 8—15.

Another remarkable feature of the Psalms, in connexion with what I have just been saying, is this:—when a person devoutly uses the Psalms, they will always seem to him as if written on purpose for himself, as if they gave exact expression to his thoughts and feelings. And surely this is of itself a very great blessing which God has given us; these holy prayers and hymns which we may use as if they were quite our own. We are warned in Holy Scripture to watch over our lips when we speak to Almighty God,* and here he has himself given us words to use which express our feelings in language better than any of our own; language, of whose perfect truth we are quite sure. And besides, as it was said of old time, that God takes delight in hearing from His children the Lord's prayer, because the words of that prayer are the words of His "well-beloved Son,"† so we may humbly hope that He will be well pleased to hear the Psalms from us in prayer and praise, they being the words of His most Holy Spirit.

And when we use the Psalms in this way, it must be an exceeding comfort to us to bear in mind that the Holy Jesus Himself seems to have used them so. We know for certain that more than once he made them His prayers, as in that solemn and awful cry to His Father from the cross: "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*"‡—and again: "*Into Thy hands I commend My spirit.*"§ From this it has been reasonably thought, that not only these words from the 22d and 31st Psalms, but that the whole of these Psalms, and others, were then and always in our Lord's mind.

And thus, as this holy book was hallowed by our Lord's use, and commended to His disciples by His example, so we find that when the Church was in her best and purest days, then did she most of all use the sacred Psalms; in public her priests and people read them through, from beginning to end, every week: and good and holy men, "the noble army of martyrs," and those great saints whom we are accustomed to call "the Fathers," did ever, in their private devotions, constantly use the same. Nor may we forget to mention a holy deacon of the Church in England, who is now at rest, who with his family

* Eccles. v. 2.

† See St. Cyprian on Lord's Prayer.

‡ St. Matt. xxvii. 46.

§ St. Luke xxiii. 46.

was in the regular habit of reading through, "from the first to the last verse," the whole Psalms in every twenty-four hours. With very good reason indeed, therefore, has this book of Psalms been called "The prayer-book of Christ and His saints."

One caution I must here give. When we use the Psalms, the great thing which we have to bear in mind is this:—that we use them not as men, but as Christians; that if we were not Christians (weak, and blind, and sinful, indeed, but still Christians) we could never rightly use the Psalms at all. This will, think, remove any difficulties which might stop our using them.

Those Psalms, for instance, which are full of hard words against our enemies, which seem to be calling down God's anger and wrath upon our fellow-men; these, being Christians, we may say, or chant, because they are God's words. It is not we who speak, but God who is speaking by us: and He is speaking not of our enemies, but of His own—the enemies of Himself and His Church.

Again: those Psalms which are so full of longing for God, and of being athirst for Him—such Psalms even the very best of men might shrink from saying of himself; in such cases, then, when we chant the Psalms, we are expressing what God's Holy Church feels towards her Lord. The Church of God is "*the King's daughter*," and she "*is all glorious within;*" and she is the spouse and bride of Christ, and is ever crying after Him, and praying for his coming. When therefore we, as members of the Church, use such Psalms as the 42d, we show forth not our feelings only, but the feelings of the whole body of Christ: His whole Church—Apostles and Prophets, and martyrs and saints.

> "Every spirit blessed,
> From realms of triumph or of rest,
> From him who saw creation's morn,
> Of all Thine angels eldest born,
> To the poor babe who died to-day,
> Take part in our thanksgiving lay."*

"MAY we not think that this, amongst others, hath been a cause of the decay of right and true devotion in these latter

* The Christian Year,—"Holy Communion."

days, namely, the neglect of this excellent book" of Psalms? "I would not have David's Psalms disused, but used frequently; and made, as they were by Athanasius and St. Jerome, a great, if not the greatest, part of our private devotions."*

So spake a holy Bishop of the Church. I will subjoin a list of Psalms, and the occasions on which they may suitably be used; chiefly from St. Athanasius:—

1. If thou wouldest describe the blessed man, who he is, and what makes him so, thou hast the 1st, 32d, 41st, 112th, and 128th Psalms.

2. If in troubles thou hast called upon God, and He has heard thee, give Him thanks in the 4th, 40th, and 116th Psalms.

3. If thou feelest afraid of God's judgments, thou mayest say the 6th, 38th, and 88th Psalms.

4. If thou knowest that men are taking counsel against thee, sing to God the 7th Psalm.

5. If thou wouldest praise God for a prosperous gathering of thy fruits, use the 8th Psalm.

6. If thou wouldest have thine enemy kept back and thy soul saved, trust not in thyself, but in the Son of God; and say the 9th Psalm.

7. If God be angry with His people, thou mayest appease Him by saying the 10th, 60th, and 74th Psalms.

8. When man threatens thee, trust in God, saying the 11th Psalm.

9. When tempted to despair, call upon the Lord, and sing the 13th, 22d, and 61st Psalms.

10. If thou hearest any blaspheme God, do thou make haste to Him, and say the 14th and 55th Psalms.

11. If thou seest one in trouble and adversity, comfort him and pray for him in the 20th Psalm.

12. If thou seest God to be thy Defender and Keeper, thou mayest be glad thereof, and praise Him in the 23d Psalm.

13. If thou art building again thy house, both of the soul, wherein God is thy guest, or thy temporal dwelling-place, sing to Him the 30th, 48th, and 127th Psalms.

14. If thou wouldest call to mind God's wonders of old time, thou mayest do so in the 44th, 78th 89th, 106th, and 114th Psalms.

* Bp. Sparrow, Rationale, pp. 23, 24; ed. 1722.

15. If thou wouldest move thyself to trust in God, who giveth to all men all things richly to enjoy, do so by the 49th Psalm.

16. If thou hast sinned, say the 51st Psalm.

17. If trouble comes on thee suddenly, say to God the 57th, 116th, and 142d Psalms.

18. If thou wouldest praise God, do so in the 65th, 66th, 148th, 149th, and 150th Psalms.

19. If thou seekest mercy, pray for it in the 67th Psalm.

20. If thou seest wicked men prosper in peace, be not offended, but sing unto God the 73d Psalm.

21. If God permit his enemies to get the upper hand, and to defile His house and persecute His Church, pray His mercy in the 79th Psalm.

22. If thou wouldest meditate on the Church as distinguished from Dissent, thou hast for this purpose the 87th Psalm.

23. If thou wouldest see and praise God's Providence in His works, thou hast the 100th, 147th, and 148th Psalms.

24. If thou wouldest remember God's judgment, thou hast the 101st Psalm.

25. If wandering thoughts hold thee captive, say the 137th Psl.

26. After temptation thou mayest give God thanks in the 140th Psalm.

27. After the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, 103d Psalm.

If thou wouldest meditate on thy Saviour, thou hast Him in every Psalm :—

1. His Birth ; 19th, 45th, 85th, 89th, 110th, and 132d Psalms.

2. His Cross and Passion ; 22d, 40th, 54th, 69th, and 88th Psalms.

3. His Resurrection ; 2d, 57th, 111th, 113th, 114th, and 118th Psalms.

4. His Ascension ; 8th, 15th, 21st, 24th, 47th, and 108th Psalms.

5. His sitting at the right-hand of God ; 110th Psalm.

6. His return for judgment ; 50th, 72d, and 82d Psalms.

When first thou risest in the morning, think of thy Saviour's resurrection and thine own ; and say, solemnly,—

"*I laid me down and slept, and rose up again ; for the Lord sustained me.*"

And let thy last thought at night be of thy Saviour's grave and thine own :—

"*I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest ; for it is Thou, Lord, only that makest me to dwell in safety.*"

THE following is a list of the Psalms which were appointed for each Sunday and holiday, in King Edward's First Book; which, together with the Epistles and Gospels ordered by the Church to be read, will supply us with subjects for sacred meditation on those days:—

	PSALM
Advent Sunday	1
2d Sunday in Advent	120
3d Sunday in Advent	4
4th Sunday in Advent	5
Christmas Day	98, 8
St. Stephen	52
St. John the Evangelist	11
The Holy Innocents	79
Sunday after Christmas	121
The Circumcision	122
The Epiphany	96
1st Sunday after Epiphany	13
2d Sunday	14
3d Sunday	15
4th Sunday	2
5th Sunday*	20
Septuagesima Sunday	23
Sexagesima	24
Quinquagesima	26
Ash Wednesday	6
1st Sunday in Lent	32
2d Sunday	130
3d Sunday	43
4th Sunday	46
5th Sunday	54
Sunday before Easter	61
Good Friday	22
Easter Eve	88
Easter Sunday	16, 3
Easter Monday	62
Easter Tuesday	113
1st Sunday after Easter	112
2d Sunday	70
3d Sunday	75
4th Sunday	82
5th Sunday	84
Ascension Day	47
Sunday after Ascension Day	93
Whit Sunday	33
Whit Monday	100
Whit Tuesday	101
Trinity Sunday	67
1st Sunday after Trinity	Part 1 of 119
2d Sunday	Part 2 of 119
3d Sunday	— 3 —
4th Sunday	— 4 —
5th Sunday	— 5 —
6th Sunday	— 6 —
7th Sunday	— 7 —
8th Sunday	— 8 —
9th Sunday	— 9 —
10th Sunday	— 10 —
11th Sunday	— 11 —
12th Sunday	— 12 —
13th Sunday	— 13 —
14th Sunday	— 14 —
15th Sunday	— 15 —
16th Sunday	— 16 —
17th Sunday	— 17 —
18th Sunday	— 18 —
19th Sunday	— 19 —
20th Sunday	— 20 —
21st Sunday	— 21 —
22d Sunday	— 22 —
23d Sunday	124
24th Sunday	125
25th Sunday	127
St. Andrew	129
St. Thomas	128
Conversion of St. Paul	138
Purification	134
St. Matthias	140
Annunciation	131
St. Mark	141
St. Philip and St. James	133
St. Barnabas	142
St. John the Baptist	143
St. Peter	144
St. James	148
St. Bartholomew	115
St. Matthew	117
St. Michael	113
St. Luke	137
St. Simon and St. Jude	150
All Saints	149

*For the sixth Sunday there was then no provision made.

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FORMS OF

PRAYERS TO BE USED IN FAMILIES,

Or in Private Devotions.

MORNING PRAYER

¶ The master or mistress having called together as many of the family as can conveniently be present, let one of them, or any other whom they shall think proper, say as follows, all kneeling:

OUR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Acknowledgment of God's *mercy and preservation, especially through the night past.*

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, in whom we live and move and have our being; We, thy needy creatures, render thee our humble praises, for thy preservation of us from the beginning of our lives to this day, and especially for having delivered us from the dangers of the past night. To thy watchful providence we owe it,* (that no disturbance hath come nigh us or our dwelling; but, that we are brought in safety to the beginning of this day.) For these thy mercies, we bless and magnify thy glorious name; humbly beseeching thee to accept this our morning sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; for his sake who lay down in the grave, and rose again for us, Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

* *When disturbance of any kind befall a family, instead of this, say,* that notwithstanding our dangers, we are brought in safety to the beginning of this day.

Dedication of soul and body to God's *service, with a resolution to be growing daily in goodness.*

AND, since it is of thy mercy, O gracious Father, that another day is added to our lives. We here dedicate both our souls and our bodies to thee and thy service, in a sober, righteous, and godly life: in which resolution, do thou, O merciful God, confirm and strengthen us; that, as we grow in age, we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Prayer for grace to enable us to perform that resolution.

BUT, O God, who knowest the weakness and corruption of our nature, and the manifold temptations which we daily meet with; We humbly beseech thee to have compassion on our infirmities, and to give us the constant assistance of thy Holy Spirit; that we may be effectually restrained from sin, and excited to our duty. Imprint upon our hearts such a dread of thy judgments, and such a grateful sense of thy goodness to us, as may make us both afraid and ashamed to offend thee. And, above all, keep in our minds a lively remembrance of that great day, in which we must give a strict account of our thoughts, words, and actions; and according to the works done in the body, be eternally rewarded or punished, by him whom thou hast appointed the Judge of quick and dead, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For grace to guide and keep us the following day, and for God's *blessing on the business of the same.*

IN particular, we implore thy grace and protection for the ensuing day. Keep us temperate in our meats and drinks, and diligent in our several callings. Grant us patience under any afflictions thou shalt see fit to lay on us, and minds always contented with our present condition. Give us grace to be just

and upright in all our dealings; quiet and peaceable; full of compassion; and ready to do good to all men, according to our abilities and opportunities. Direct us in all our ways * (and prosper the works of our hands in the business of our several stations.) Defend us from all dangers and adversities; and be graciously pleased to take us, and all things belonging to us, under thy fatherly care and protection. These things, and whatever else thou shalt see necessary and convenient to us, we humbly beg, through the merits and mediation of thy Son JESUS CHRIST our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

On Sunday morning, instead of this, say, and let thy Holy Spirit accompany us to the place of thy public worship, making us serious and attentive, and raising our minds from the thoughts of this world to the consideration of the next, that we may fervently join in the prayers and praises of thy Church, and listen to our duty with honest hearts, in order to practise it.

THE grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and the love of GOD, and the fellowship of the HOLY GHOST, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

HYMN 164. (L. M.)

Morning Hymn.

1 AWAKE, my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily course of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and early rise
To pay thy morning sacrifice.

2 Redeem thy misspent time that's past;
Live this day, as if 'twere thy last:
T' improve thy talents take due care;
'Gainst the great day thyself prepare.

3 Let all thy converse be sincere,
Thy conscience as the noon-day clear:
Think how the all-seeing God, thy ways
And all thy secret thoughts surveys.

4 Wake, and lift up thyself, my heart,
And with the angels bear thy part;
Who all night long unwearied sing,
Glory to thee, eternal King.

5 I wake, I wake, ye heavenly choir;
May your devotion me inspire;
That I like you my age may spend,
Like you may on my God attend.
6 May I like you in God delight,
Have all day long my God in sight;
Perform like you my Maker's will:
O! may I never more do ill.
7 Glory to thee, who safe has kept,
And hast refresh'd me while I slept:
Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake,
I may of endless life partake.
8 Lord, I my vows to thee renew;
Scatter my sins as morning dew;
Guard my first spring of thought and will,
And with thyself my spirit fill.
9 Direct, control, suggest this day,
All I design, or do, or say,
That all my pow'rs, with all their might,
In thy sole glory may unite.
10 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him, all creatures here below:
Praise him above, y' angelic host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

EVENING PRAYER.

¶ The family being together, a little before bed time, let the Master or Mistress, or any other whom they shall think proper, say as follows, all kneeling:

OUR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Confession of sins, with a prayer for contrition and pardon

MOST merciful God, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and hast promised forgiveness to all those who

confess and forsake their sins; We come before thee in an humble sense of our own unworthiness, acknowledging our manifold transgressions of thy righteous laws.* But, O gracious Father, who desirest not the death of a sinner, look upon us, we beseech thee, in mercy, and forgive us all our transgressions. Make us deeply sensible of the great evil of them; and work in us an hearty contrition; that we may obtain forgiveness at thy hands, who art ever ready to receive humble and penitent sinners; for the sake of thy Son JESUS CHRIST our only Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

** Here, let him who reads, make a short pause, that every one may secretly confess the sins and failings of that day.*

Prayer for grace to reform and grow better.

AND lest, through our own frailty, or the temptations which encompass us, we be drawn again into sin, vouchsafe us, we beseech thee, the direction and assistance of thy Holy Spirit. Reform whatever is amiss in the temper and disposition of our souls; that no unclean thoughts, unlawful designs, or inordinate desires, may rest there. Purge our hearts from envy, hatred, and malice; that we may never suffer the sun to go down upon our wrath; but may always go to our rest in peace, charity, and good-will, with a conscience void of offence towards thee and towards men: That so, we may be preserved pure and blameless, unto the coming of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. *Amen.*

The Intercession.

AND accept, O LORD, our intercessions for all mankind. Let the light of thy Gospel shine upon all nations; and may as many as have received it, live as becomes it. Be gracious unto thy Church; and grant that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may serve thee faithfully. Bless all in authority over us; and so rule their hearts and strengthen their hands, that

they may punish wickedness and vice, and maintain thy true religion and virtue. Send down thy blessings, temporal and spiritual, upon all our relations, friends and neighbors. Reward all who have done us good, and pardon all those who have done or wish us evil, and give them repentance and better minds. Be merciful to all who are in any trouble; and do thou, the God of pity, administer to them according to their several necessities, for his sake who went about doing good, thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

The Thanksgiving.

TO our prayers, O Lord, we join our unfeigned thanks for all thy mercies; for our being, our reason, and all other endowments and faculties of soul and body; for our health, friends, food, and raiment, and all the other comforts and conveniences of life. Above all, we adore thy mercy in sending thy only Son into the world, to redeem us from sin and eternal death, and in giving us the knowledge and sense of our duty towards thee. We bless thee for thy patience with us, notwithstanding our many and great provocations; for all the directions, assistances, and comforts of thy Holy Spirit; for thy continual care and watchful providence over us through the whole course of our lives; and particularly for the mercies and benefits of the past day: beseeching thee to continue these thy blessings to us; and to give us grace to show our thankfulness in a sincere obedience to his laws, through whose merits and intercession we received them all, thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Prayer for God's protection through the night following.

IN particular, we beseech thee to continue thy gracious protection to us this night. Defend us from all dangers and mischiefs, and from the fear of them; that we may enjoy such refreshing sleep, as may fit us for the duties of the following day. Make us ever mindful of the time when we shall lie down in the

dust; and grant us grace always to live in such a state, that we may never be afraid to die: so that living and dying we may be thine, through the merits and satisfaction of thy Son CHRIST JESUS, in whose name we offer up these our imperfect prayers. *Amen.*

THE grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and the love GOD, and the fellowship of the HOLY GHOST, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

¶ On Sundays, and on other days, when it may be convenient, it will be proper to begin with a chapter, or part of a chapter, from the New Testament.

HYMN 168. (L. M.)

Evening Hymn.

1 GLORY to thee, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light:
Keep me, O keep me, King of kings,
Under thine own Almighty wings.

2 Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,
The ills that I this day have done;
That with the world, myself, and Thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

3 Teach me to live, that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed;
Teach me to die, that so I may
Triumphing rise at the last day.

4 O may my soul on thee repose,
And with sweet sleep mine eyelids close:
Sleep, that may me more vig'rous make,
To serve my God, when I awake.

5 When in the night I sleepless lie,
My soul with heavenly thoughts supply:
Let no ill dreams disturb my rest,
No powers of darkness me molest.

6 O when shall I, in endless day,
For ever chase dark sleep away,
And hymns divine with angels sing,
Glory to thee, eternal King!

7 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, y' angelic host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

HYMN. 162. (II. 3.)

Daily Dependance.

1 When, streaming from the eastern skies,
The morning light salutes mine eyes,
O Sun of Righteousness divine,
On me with beams of mercy shine;
Chase the dark clouds of sin away,
And turn my darkness into day.

2 When to heaven's great and glorious King
My morning sacrifice I bring;
And, mourning o'er my guilt and shame,
Ask mercy, Saviour, in thy name;
My conscience sprinkle with thy blood,
And be my advocate with God.

3 As ev'ry day thy mercy spares
Will bring its trials and its cares;
O Saviour, till my life shall end,
Be thou my counsellor and friend:
Teach me thy precepts, all divine,
And be thy pure example mine,

4 When pain transfixes ev'ry part,
Or languor settles at the heart;
When on my bed, diseas'd, oppress'd,
I turn, and sigh, and long for rest;
O great Physician! see my grief,
And grant thy servant sweet relief.

5 Should poverty's destructive blow
Lay all my worldly comforts low;
And neither help nor hope appear,
My steps to guide, my heart to cheer,
Lord, pity and supply my need,
For thou, on earth, wast poor indeed.

6 When each day's scenes and labors close,
And wearied nature seeks repose,
With pard'ning mercy richly bless'd,
Guard me, my Saviour, while I rest:
And, as each morning sun shall rise,
O lead me onward to the skies.

7 And, at my life's last setting sun,
My conflicts o'er, my labors done,
Jesus, thy heavenly radiance shed,
To cheer and bless my dying bed;
And, from death's gloom my spirit raise,
To see thy face and sing thy praise.

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No 127.

PRESCRIBED FORMS OF PRAYERS,

IN THE PUBLIC WORSHIP OF GOD.

Ephesus was the metropolis or chief city of the province of pro-consular Asia, in which Timothy was appointed to exercise Episcopal jurisdiction. The fact is attested by all antiquity: and if power of ordaining, of judging, and ruling in the Church, is an essential character of Episcopal authority, the office of Timothy is incidentally proved by various passages in this Epistle.

Having in the first chapter instructed Timothy concerning the regulation of preachers in his province, St. Paul proceeds in the second to direct him concerning the duties of prayer and the public worship; "I exhort, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings and all that are in authority." Timothy was to take care that such prayers should he made in all churches under his inspection and jurisdiction. This order could only be observed by providing set forms of prayers, framed according to this rule of the Apostle, whose words were interpreted to this effect in the primitive Church. The author of the ancient book concerning the Calling of the Gentiles, cites the words of the text and remarks upon them, that this rule was so religiously observed, that there is no part of the world, in which there are not forms of prayer suited to this pattern.

All the ancient liturgies now extant, were formed upon this model: and however they may have been corrupted and interpolated, there are certain forms and expressions in which they all agree, and which may therefore be reasonably supposed to be of apostolical origin. Such is the invitation in the office of the Communion, "Lift up your hearts;" and the response, "We lift them up unto the Lord." Such also is the other invitation: "Let us give thanks unto our Lord God;" and the response, "It is meet and right so to do." The latter is found in all the most ancient liturgies: there is no liturgy in which the former does not occur.

Such also is the doxology: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." This doxology was in use from the earliest times, and is recognized by Justin Martyr, who lived almost within the Apostolic age. It is even recorded, that

the last prayer of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, was in these words: "I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, by the eternal high priest JESUS CHRIST, thy beloved Son, by whom to thee, together with him in the HOLY GHOST, be glory now and for ever." The Epistle of the Church of Smyrna, which contains the martyrs' prayer, concludes in a similar form: "We bid you farewell in our LORD JESUS, with whom be glory to GOD the Father and to the HOLY GHOST." In the apostolical constitutions is this doxology: "To thee, O FATHER, and to thy Son, CHRIST our Lord, and God and King, and to the HOLY GHOST, be glory, praise, majesty, adoration and worship, now and to eternal ages. Amen." This doxology did not originate in opposition to any heresy whatever, but was always an essential part of Christian worship; as all Christians are baptized in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST, they are bound to render to each person divine worship and adoration.

The prayer of oblation of the Christian sacrifice in the Eucharist is another instance of the conformity of all Christian churches. All the ancient liturgies agree almost in the words, entirely in the sense and method, and from this universal agreement it is natural to infer that this form of prayer was delivered at the first foundation and settlement of the churches.

There is another proof of this harmony in the office of Baptism, in the renunciation of the devil and his works, and in the profession of faith in the Holy Trinity. This form is to be found in the liturgies of all the churches of CHRIST throughout the world, almost in the very same words, and is therefore also of primitive and apostolical origin.

Indeed the public worship of GOD hath been conducted according to a set form of prayer, in all settled churches, even from the times before the Christian era. The ancient Jews had their set forms of prayer, which are good and excellent in themselves, and are deficient only in not being offered through the name of JESUS CHRIST. Our Lord himself, in the prayer which he recommended to his disciples, offered not words of his own conception, but compiled the prayer from the Jewish Euchologies. The prefatory words. "Our FATHER, who art in heaven," are the common introduction of the Jewish prayers. Our Lord was far from affecting novelty, and he hath given an example of the respect which is due to ancient and approved forms of prayer.

So strong is the argumeut from antiquity in favour of preconcerted liturgies and they are not only ancient, but they are useful and necessary to obviate and prevent all extravagant levities and worse impieties in the public worship of GOD. The want of them was seen and felt in the days of the great Rebellion, when the public prayers were in many places so ridiculous and absurd, as to expose religion to the scorn and contempt of the irreligious.

Liturgies are necessary in the public worship of GOD, that ministers less learned may have a suitable form of devotion provided

for them; that the solemn worship and administration of the sacraments may not be left to men of little judgment and discretion and that the more learned may be exempted from a temptation to vanity and ostentation.

Liturgies are necessary, that all the members of the Church may know the condition of public communion, and understand beforehand, what prayers they are to join in. This knowledge can only be obtained by means of a public and prescribed liturgy. No man who has not an implicit faith in the officiating minister, will immediately join in extemporary prayer, without considering whether the prayers are such that he may safely and heartily join in them.

Liturgies are necessary to secure the *established doctrine* and *faith* of the Church. Ministers who conduct the public worship at their own discretion, will naturally express their private sentiments in their public prayers. Heresies may thus be propagated with singular facility, and the people will readily acquiesce in the truth of that doctrine which the minister ventures to address in prayer to God. In a prescribed form care will be taken that the prayers shall correspond with the articles of religion, and recommend the belief of them. The ancient liturgies were systems of *orthodox divinity*, and *antidotes to heresy*. The Liturgy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the creeds and in the doxologies, are a security against Arianism and Socinianism, nor can any heretic join in our offices of prayer and praise, or in our confessions of faith.

When men pretend that they cannot be edified by set forms of prayer, they declare of themselves that they are of a different spirit from that which has always animated the Church of Christ, and that they are incapable of worshipping God in the manner of the primitive martyrs and their successors for many ages. This objection would hardly have been made, if men had not been misinformed concerning the gift and spirit of prayer, and led to suppose that it consists not only in holy affections, but in a variety and volubility of words, and therefore that a form is inconsistent with the spirit of prayer. If this supposition were just, neither the Psalms nor the Lord's Prayer could be recited in the spirit of prayer.

Others pretend that they do not object to all forms of prayer, and that they do not disapprove of our Liturgy, because it is a litu but because it contains things not agreeable to the Word of God. Without asserting that our Liturgy is absolutely perfect or incapable of improvement, which would be to call it more than human, it may be and it has been maintained, that there is in it nothing sinful, nothing which can justify separation, nothing which does not admit of candid interpretation. It is an office agreeable to the Scriptures, and to the primitive liturgies; it is the *best liturgy now extant*. Moreover, if the objection is only against particular passages, why is not the Liturgy used in the public congregations with the omission of those passages, or why is not a new liturgy substituted in its place! It is plain, that the real objection is urged

against liturgies in general, and this objection is contrary to the practice of the universal Church.

It may be observed, for the confirmation of our adherence to the Protestant Episcopal Church and to its Liturgy, and for our own private consolation, that we worship God in the manner of the *primitive Christians*, in conformity with the *doctrine of the Apostle* in the text, and with the *practice of the universal Church.* The compilers of our Liturgy rejected whatever was *corrupt*, and retained whatever was *sound* in the preceding liturgies. We have no invocation of angels, but pray to God alone through the only Mediator, Jesus Christ. We have no fabulous legends, but the pure Scriptures read in an excellent order. Our prayers are in a language which all understand. We have the sacraments entire, administered reverently, discreetly, and without pageantry.

Let us be thankful for these benefits; punctual in our attendance upon the public worship and at the table of our Lord; serious, reverent and devout, and free from that indifference, which would render the best liturgies ineffectual. Let our *practice correspond with our prayers*, and with our character as Christians and of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and our prayers will be acceptable, and bring down a blessing upon our Church and country.—Bishop Bull.

A MORNING PRAYER.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent, create and make in me a new and contrite heart, that I, worthily lamenting my sins, and acknowledging my wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness. Thou only, O God, canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men: grant that I may love the things which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, my heart may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found. Pour into my heart such love towards thee, that I may love thee above all things. Increase in me, O my Saviour, a spirit of true religion: may I daily become more and more conformed to thy gospel. Enable me to imitate thy pure and holy life. Enable me to pray unto thee with most devout and hearty affections. Diminish my respect and affection for earthly things, and excite my most earnest desires for the happiness of heaven. After thus faithfully serving thee, O God, through the short term of my present life, may my death be happy—may I receive the never-fading crown of glory, and be admitted into everlasting joy, through Jesus Christ my Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

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No. 131

AN

ADDRESS TO PLAIN PEOPLE,

ON THE

DUTY OF FAMILY PRAYER,

Allow me, my friends, to call your attention to a subject, which I fear has been too much neglected by many of you as well as of other classes—I mean the duty of family prayer.

I call it a duty, because God has a right to the worship and the obedience of all his people; for it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; it is he that hath given us his beloved Son to redeem us, and, by his death on the cross, to procure for us eternal salvation, through faith in his precious blood; therefore "we are not our own, for we are bought with a price," and we are bound to "glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are his."

Prayer, therefore, is the bounden duty of every one; and not only a duty, it is also our greatest privilege: for, by prayer, we may obtain what we need for this world and the next; by prayer, we obtain more love to God our Father, more faith in Christ our Saviour, and more of the influence of the Holy Spirit, to sanctify our hearts, and to enable us to live a holy life; by prayer we may obtain pardon for our sins, and grace to renounce them; and by prayer we may be preserved from all temptation, sin and danger. What a blessing is it, thus to be allowed to ask pardon, and peace, and everlasting life, and to be assured that God will give us what we ask; for Christ himself has said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." And yet, notwithstanding all this, notwithstanding prayer is a commanded duty and a blessed privilege, yet how little time is devoted to prayer, by many of God's accountable people! how few are there who begin and end the day, by asking God's blessing, and imploring his help, and praising him for all his mercies!

Perhaps you, my reader, never unite with your families in offering up prayers and praises to that God, in whom you live, and move, and have your being! Then let me ask, Why is this? Is it because you have nothing to pray for? have you no blessings to ask, no wants to be supplied, no sorrows and trials under which

you need comfort, no difficulties in which you need counsel and assistance? nay, more than all this, have you no sins to be pardoned, no soul to be saved? Is this your case? Oh, no; you cannot plead any such excuse for neglecting prayer to God.

Mankind are all occupied with their various duties and engagements, and have not always the power to help you; and even when they have, they are sometimes weary of being intreated, and are apt to turn a deaf ear to your supplications: but there is One who is never weary of hearing prayer, one whose ear is never deaf to the supplications of his people, one to whom therefore it is never in vain to apply, for none ever sought his face in vain; and this is God your heavenly Father, who loves to hear the voice of his children; for he has commanded you to "pray without ceasing," and "in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to make your requests known unto him," and then he promises to "supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Yes, be assured that God loves you with a tender love, for has he not given you the greatest proof of this, by sending his own beloved Son to die for you, that, believing on him, you might be saved? That blessed Saviour having accomplished all this for man, has ascended into heaven, where he now sits at the right hand of God; but yet he still remembers you, he still intercedes for you, and will present all your prayers to his Father, and your Father, if you offer them up in his name; for he has given you this promise, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."

The Bible contains many such promises as these, to encourage us to pray; for Christ says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;" and, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." If such, then, are the gracious invitations to prayer, is it not the height of ingratitude to neglect and slight them? If an earthly monarch were to desire you to come unto him, whenever you were in distress, that he might relieve you, would you not rejoice to come, would you not often present yourself at his palace gates, and claim his offered bounty? and if you neglected to apply to him, you would surely feel that it was your own fault if you were without relief. Now this is just your case: the King of kings, the Lord of heaven graciously invites, nay, he commands you to apply to him, for he says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me;" if, therefore, you refuse to call upon him, surely the fault must rest with you, and not with God. Resolve, then, to ask a blessing upon yourselves and families from Him who alone can give it, and who has so kindly promised to give it; for the Bible tells you that "the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him;" "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them;" he invites you to cast "all your care upon him, for he careth for you."

O who would not come unto the Lord, when thus invited? Who would refuse such blessings? Who would not ask, when he could have only for asking?

But here let none mistake me: we are not to ask only for temporal blessings, that is, for the supply of our bodily wants; but we must desire, first, spiritual blessings, that is, we must ask for faith and grace, to know and love God more, to believe in Christ, and depend on him for the salvation of our souls; we must ask for the teaching and influences of the Holy Spirit; we must ask for pardon of sin, and grace to lead a godly, righteous, and sober life, and to walk closely and humbly with our God, and finally, to be received to dwell with him in glory everlasting. All this must be our first great object; but yet we may ask for temporal blessings, we may pray for our daily bread, for our Lord himself has taught us to do so in his own prayer, and by this he teaches us to pray for necessaries but not luxuries. We should seek a supply of our daily wants, and the good things of this life, only so far as God sees it good for us; and more than this we ought not to desire, for we are quite sure that God knows best, and we must therefore leave it to him to give us what he thinks fit. He tells us in his holy word, that there shall be no want to them that fear him, and that "they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." God has declared, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Make this, then, your great object; seek to cultivate personal piety, and family piety; and henceforth let the resolution of Joshua be yours: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." If you are the father or mother of a family, let it be your delight to lead your children to God; call them together morning and evening, to unite with one heart and voice to praise that God who has preserved and sustained you all unto this day; let your prayers be offered up to the throne of grace, to implore God's blessing upon yourselves, and upon each other, humbly acknowledging your many sins, and begging him to pardon them, for his dear Son's sake, and to keep you from sinning any more. Oh what blessings this might be the means of bringing upon a family! how much evil might be averted, how many temptations might be resisted, if God's grace were thus daily sought to keep you from sin and danger!

But without this, what is your security? you enter upon your various employments, you go forth unarmed to meet all the trials and temptations which may assail you, and which Satan, your great enemy, loves to throw in your way. Therefore no wonder if you fall into sin, for you are trusting to your own strength which is perfect weakness, forgetting him who could hold you up and who has given you this gracious assurance: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." But you have no right to expect any such support for yourselves and families if you do not value it, and do not ask it; for although God has promised his grace and assistance to all that ask it, he has nowhere pro-

mised it to those that ask it not; nay, I could tell you of an awful curse which is threatened by God, to those families that live in the neglect of Him and His worship; for the Bible declares that God will pour out his fury upon the families that call not upon his name; and that "the Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy;" for, "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

These are solemn words, but they are true, for they are the words of God, who cannot lie; and if we examine the sacred Scriptures, we shall find that the Lord has ever blessed the righteous, and those that loved and served him, while the wicked were visited with his anger, and punished accordingly.

Yet God delights not in punishing; he loves rather to bless his people, and invites them to come unto him, that they may live. Oh how many are the gracious promises that he gives to encourage all to serve him, and to bring up their families to love and honour him! Thus, "Thou shalt keep his statutes, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee." Then we read that God blesseth the habitation of the just: "The house of the righteous shall stand;" "The tabernacle of the upright shall flourish."

And now, my friends, will you still refuse to begin this duty, this blessed privilege, of family prayer? I am aware that there are some difficulties to be overcome, and that some exertion is necessary on your part; but surely it is worth while to make some effort to obey God who is able and willing to give you every blessing, both in this world and the next. What then is your determination?

Some may say, "I have never yet begun to have family prayer, and I do not like to begin now; besides, my friends and neighbours do not do so, and I should be thought singular, and get laughed at, as being righteous over much." Is this your reason? Ah, this is, indeed a poor excuse. You say you have never done so before: then, if you have lived so long in the neglect of this important duty, it is, surely, high time to begin to amend; and if God has in mercy spared you until this day, you should show your love and gratitude to him, by uniting with your family to bless and praise his holy name, to thank him for all his mercies, and to beg a continuance of them for the future. And as to the other reason, that your friends and neighbours do not do this, why that is no excuse for you. Your neighbours may sin against God, and incur his displeasure, but for this they must give an account at the last day; but you will then have to stand alone, and to answer for what you have done; for to your own Master you must stand or fall. And as to the old worn out objection of being righteous over much, you need not fear that; there is much more danger on the other side; for when you come to die, you will never regret having been too religious. Many, indeed, at that solemn hour have bitterly lamented not having served God more. but none

ever repented of having served him too much. When called to part from all that is dear to us on earth, who is it that can help us if God is not our friend? and if we have not loved him and served him, if we have no interest in Christ, no faith in his atoning blood, where is our hope, in what do we trust, for our eternal salvation?

But there is another objection that is sometimes made as an excuse for the neglect of family prayer, and that is, want of time. But this may also be answered. You would not make this excuse, I think, if the master for whom you work were to offer to pay you for half an hour's extra work, morning and evening. You would then, I doubt not, endeavour to comply, and be glad to do so. And you have a kind Master who does require this of you; he invites you to come to him and serve him; and he offers you such blessings, that the greatest monarch upon earth has it not in his power to bestow: and yet you still refuse upon the plea of want of time. O be assured that family prayer would be no hindrance to your daily duties; so far from it, it would be a help to you: for there is a good old proverb which says, that "Prayer and provender never hindered any man's journey." And surely this one quarter of an hour (or even less time than that) could be spared from other business without any material loss. And in the evening, even this excuse cannot hold good, for then the day's work is ended, and you surely have time enough to devote to family worship. How delightful the sight of the father of the family reading a portion of the Holy Scriptures, while his wife and children are attentively listening to these blessed words of eternal life, and learning their duty to God and their fellow men, and their way to heaven; and then when this is ended, they all fall down on their knees, in humble gratitude to that God who has made them and preserved them to thank and bless him for all the mercies of the past day, and to implore his protection through the night, and to ask him to pardon all their sins for Jesus Christ's sake.

But another may say, I am too poor and ignorant, I cannot attempt it; besides, I am a great sinner; I dare not come unto God. O let not this prevent you, for remember, that God invites all to come unto him, and especially loves to help those who feel that in spiritual things they are the poor and needy; and it is because you are a sinner, that you have such need to come unto him. Christ came into the world to save such; for he says, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." O be not discouraged therefore; for God does not require learning or knowledge, he only requires a humble, penitent heart, and a deep sorrow for sin, and then your prayers, offered in the name of Jesus, will be accepted, however short and imperfect they may be. Remember, the prayer of the proud pharisee was rejected by God, while the short and simple prayer of the publican was accepted, although it was only these few words, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Such a prayer as that will ever be heard and answered, if it is offered up

in the same humble spirit: but if ye have not, it is because ye ask not.

But there may be yet another objection, Some may feel really desirous to perform this duty of family prayer, but they want courage to begin; they will, perhaps, lay this tract down with a sigh, and say, "Well, this is all very true, I know it is a duty to do this, but I cannot resolve to begin; therefore, though I am sorry for it, yet I cannot help it." Yes you can help it; for you acknowledge it to be a duty, therefore there is no excuse for neglecting it; and if you feel a real love to God, and a desire to serve him, you will ask him to help you. The Bible says, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Go, then, and ask him to enable you to overcome all your difficulties; ask him to give you courage to begin, and grace to persevere, and when once you have begun, you will find all your difficulties gone; and O never let shame for what man can say, prevent your serving God. Be ashamed of sin, be ashamed of neglecting God, but O never, never, be ashamed of acknowledging him, and confessing him before men; for remember what Christ himself says, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (*Mark* viii. 38.)

And now, my friends, what can I say more? Will you still refuse? Will you still be among those families that live without God in the world, and who never call upon his name?

I must speak once more to you, in the words of Joshua, chap. xxiv., when the tribes of Shechem were assembled before him: "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. Choose you this day whom ye will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

This was his language, and mark their answer.

"And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods; therefore will we also serve the Lord; for he is our God."

My friends, may this answer also be yours, and may God enable you to fulfil this good resolution, and then shall it be said of you, as it was of faithful Abraham, of whom the Lord himself thus spake, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."

O begin, then, at once; do not delay, and put off till a future day, what ought to be done now. Remember that time is short, that life is uncertain, and that a future opportunity may not be yours. Go, then, and pray to God to enable you to do it, and say, "Lord, teach us to pray," and then begin this evening, and call your family around you, and offer up your united prayers for pardon and peace,

through Jesus Christ, who has graciously promised to be with you, for he says, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Thus then the Lord himself shall bless you, yea God, even our own God, shall give you his blessing.

☞It may be well to remind those who desire to begin this duty, that the Book of Common Prayer contains "Forms of Prayer to be used *in Families*," as well as the Forms for *Public Worship*.

It may be said—and it *has* been said, for want of more plausible objections—that "We may see the practices of family religion often exercised, and none the better for them."

True: and so (to all outside appearance) are many—very many—none the better for having been baptized; many, none the better for coming to church; none the better for even having been partakers of the 'most comfortable sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.' Yet would you wish to see a Christian people *without* the ordinances of the Lord? Do not let us think or speak so. We know that the effect of *all* Christian endeavours rests, and must rest, with the Most High alone; we need not to be told that we ourselves cannot work miracles; we know it but too well. But if it be the truth, that certain means, placed by the Almighty within our power, are *of a nature* to promote, and *likely* to promote the end of holiness; if we have ground for feeling sure, that the employment of such means is agreeable to reason, and in accordance with the will of God; then are we bound to use such instruments, and leave the issue in His hands.

When we see a Christian honestly resolved to present himself and those belonging to him to the Almighty day by day, let us attend to the *true* language which such determination speaks, and should be understood to speak *of itself*. Are not the words that follow something like what we may seem to hear such a head of a family speaking, by his very act, to those around him?

"My dear children and domestics, whom God hath entrusted to me, I assemble you thus together, and so long as you remain under my roof shall continue to do so, that I may present you daily before the Lord, as those that are His. The Scriptures tell us, and my own heart bears them witness, that He is the Lord our God, and we are all His people and the sheep of His pasture, On Him therefore we should call continually; for we live but by His mercy. But we are bound together by a tie yet closer than this. We are indeed the sheep of His pasture; but we are, by nature, sheep gone astray; and we can neither approach Him now acceptably by prayer, nor justly hope to come to Him hereafter in presence, except in the name and for the sake of one great Shepherd of us all—the Lord Jesus Christ. Concerning Him

we shall learn more in reading pious books and the divine Scriptures; as we shall also be instructed more concerning the work and power of the Holy Spirit in confirming Christian faith, and making holy a believer's heart. But it is only needful to say now, I deal with you in this manner because I believe in God, and in his Son, and in the Holy Spirit with my own heart, and would have you believe the same. My own belief is fixed by many weighty reasons, but perhaps this one above all—because I am quite sure of having often done in thought so wickedly, that I cannot reasonably hope to be forgiven by a God of perfect purity, whose laws I have thus broken, without some satisfaction made, of power to reconcile Him to me. Now, we ourselves can make no worthy satisfaction; since even our best thoughts, and actions, and desires have much alloy of evil mixed up with them. But Scripture tells us, that our Saviour Jesus Christ has made this satisfaction for us. We are all of us, therefore, God's property, redeemed with a great price: as such I present you thus to Him, and may He mercifully look upon you, and accept you!

"He only (let it be well understood) can make you holy. I cannot do this. All men have not, because all men will not seek, nor yet accept, the gift of faith; and it may be, that some of *you* will not. But you shall at the least possess *the means of believing*, so far as depends on me; and you at least shall understand, that there is such a truth to be believed as that of our redemption by the Son of God, and reconciliation freely offered, through His intercession, to all that bear the name of Christ.—So, therefore, construe the intention of our worship, and prosper as ye shall believe!"

Now suppose that, instead of idly covering sin with unreal excuses for neglect of Christian duty, fathers of families were in general—with any thing like one consent—to act in some such way as this among their households; is there no wisdom to be learnt, nor any fruit to be expected from it?—*J. Miller.*

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ON

THE DUTY OF

MORNING AND EVENING

DEVOTION

STEREOTYPED BY JAMES CONNER, NEW-YORK.

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ON THE DUTY

OF

MORNING AND EVENING DEVOTION.

NEGLIGENCE of the pious exercises of devotion is commonly the first step to infidelity in principle, to immorality in practice, to deadness of conscience, hardness of heart, and, in fine, to a profligate life, an unhappy death, and a miserable eternity. For when a man neglects to revive in his heart, by meditation, praise, and prayer, an awe of the Divine Majesty, the remembrance of his benefits, the sense of his providence, and the apprehensions of his all-seeing eye, and impartial justice to punish or reward every man according to his works, it naturally and necessarily follows, that his heart remains unseasoned with love and fear of God, his temper unsanctified, and his sins unpardoned: his affections become grovelling and earthly; his passions, for want of being overawed and directed by religion, are violent and tumultuous; he rises and lies down without that grace, mercy, and peace upon his mind, which devotion inspires; and, consequently, every day and night is more and more estranged from God and goodness, more and more devoted to the extravagance of riot, the anxiety of avarice, and to the fury of all those passions and appetites that hurry those that forget God into guilt and perdition.

These being the dreadful effects of the negligence of prayer, it has been the constant practice of the pious and virtuous in all ages, and of all religions, to begin and end the day with the worship of the Supreme Being, and to employ their first thoughts in the morning, and their last at night, in acknowledging his benefits, imploring his pardon, soliciting his grace and protection, and consecrating themselves, their families, and their designs, by the sacred offices of prayer and praise.

In order, then, to prevent those evils, and to restore that important duty of morning and evening devotion where it is neglected; to confirm the practice where it is continued; and to render *all* regular and constant in beginning and ending the day with the worship of the living God, it will be useful to show the reasonableness, necessity, and advantage of beginning and ending every day with the sacrifice of prayer and praise.

And first, it may be observed, that when the Almighty voice pronounced, "Let there be light," and the new created world first emerged out of darkness, the Scripture informs us, that "the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy." And as every morning presents us with a lively emblem, or rather a real imitation of this grand transaction, so it should

inspire us with the same pious sensations, raise our thoughts to the power and providence of our Maker, and fill our souls with gratitude, and our mouths with praise: for it is still because God says, "Let there be light," that the morning arises, and the whole scene around is majestic, pleasant, and engaging; tending powerfully to affect the human heart, to awaken all its best affections of gratitude, admiration, and love, and raise them to adore and contemplate the Creator of all things. And, indeed, the man who feels no impulse of devotion, and has no thoughts of God, of his providence, and redeeming love, in the morning and night, has just reason to suspect the inclinations of his heart, and is undoubtedly unacquainted with all those great ideas of the power, and goodness, and wisdom, and holiness, and majesty of God, that constitute a truly religious disposition.

But as the face of nature inspires, and reason dictates morning devotion, so gratitude must strongly suggest it to every well disposed mind. Let the reflections be engraven on our hearts, that every man who sleeps, is as unable to preserve himself as a newborn infant; that every sense is suspended; that he neither sees nor hears; but that he lies a helpless prey to every enemy, and to every accident. A breath of infected air may stifle him; some humour broke loose in his body, may send him into eternity before he is able to ask relief: an enemy may surprize, or a fire may consume him: and therefore when he awakes out of this state of insensibility, and finds himself safe in his body, sound in his mind, refreshed in his strength, and recruited in his spirits, it is unpardonable thoughtlessness, and monstrous ingratitude, not to remember and acknowledge that gracious Providence which watched for his preservation, and was powerful to protect him in a state of weakness. Were our eyes opened to perceive how often the Almighty interposes for our preservation by day and night—sometimes by suggestions into our minds, sometimes by overruling the deliberations and designs of others, sometimes by the ministry of his angels, and often by the immediate exercise of his irresistible power—we should, if possible, be more astonished by his works of providence than by those of creation, and find that many a night when we lay down fearless, slept sound, and awoke cheerful, we were on the very brink of destruction, and should never have awaked at all, had not his providence interposed to suspend and divert accidents, and turn away dangers.

To sleep and awake again are so common and ordinary things, that the miracle is disregarded, and the mercy makes but a faint impression: yet, in fact, there are wonders in it that the wisest cannot account for; and a sweetness and refreshment which the most simple and thoughtless cannot fail to perceive and admire. Our anxieties are lulled to rest; the very pains of our body are suspended, and the Almighty gives us ease from all our labours. When this restorative balm is withholden from us but for one night, how tedious do its hours appear, how flat are our spirits, how languid are our limbs! On the contrary, how sensible are

we of its value, and how sweet do we feel it, when it is restored! Sure then the preservation and refreshment with which God in his goodness blesses us through the night, deserve our most sincere and hearty acknowledgments in the morning. Let us, therefore, give the first fruits of his benefits always to himself, and whilst our spirits are brisk, our bodies vigorous, and our minds free from distraction, let us pay our grateful homage of praise.

In truth, when a family meets in the morning with health, reason, and refreshed spirits; when parents receive their children and children their parents, from this state of helpless insensibility; when no bed has proved a preparative grave; when no chamber contains its lodger in a bed of sickness; when no enemy and no accident has hurt their persons or their fortunes, surely *gratitude* should suggest to every individual of them, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness, and tender mercies."

But interest, as well as reason and gratitude, should prompt us to remember our Creator, and implore his blessings and protection every morning; because it is he alone who can bless our enterprises with success, and prosper the works of our hands; for without him nothing is strong, nothing is wise. Would we be rich? "It is the blessing of God that maketh rich." Would we have many friends? "When a man's ways please the Lord he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him." Would we wish our children to be grateful and prosperous? It is God alone who can "turn the hearts of children to their parents," prosper them by his providence, and sanctify them by his grace. In a word, whatever our designs be through the day, whatever are our views and wishes in this world, if they be just and honest, "Commit thy works unto God, and thy thoughts shall be established; commit thy way unto God, and he will bring it to pass; in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths."

But when we go on from day to day without asking his blessing, or acknowledging his providence, we not only act with ingratitude and contempt of his mercy, but we in some measure bid defiance to his providence, and seem to say, by our practice, that our own sagacity and diligence are sufficient to secure us success. Let me add further, that as his blessing is necessary for the success of our designs through the day, so it is also for our personal safety, and the preservation of our lives.

He is surely very adventurous, who can go into a world like this, when death lies in wait in so many disguises, without having first committed himself to the care of heaven, and implored the protection of Almighty God. Is there any place in which we can say with assurance, "Death is not here?" Or any time in which *we* can say, "My hour is not yet come?"

Now, every man would surely wish to spend the morning in which he is to leave this world, in the worship of that God before

whom he is to appear. And as every morning, for aught we know, may prove the morning of our last day upon earth, we should, therefore, take care to recommend ourselves to the God of the quick and the dead, every morning, that so whether "in life or in death we may be the Lord's."

But further, though success in our designs be desirable · though children and friends be dear, and life sweet; yet there is still something more valuable to engage us to solicit the Most High God, and give our first thoughts to devotion every morning; that is, the preservation of our souls from guilt.

Surely, as we go out into a world thronged with temptations; as we have an enemy that "goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;" as our passions are so easily inflamed, and so extravagant and heedless when they are on fire; as our hearts are so fickle, and our reason so weak; if we have any tenderness for our immortal souls, or any happiness in bringing home with us consciences void of offence, we shall not go out into such a world without soliciting the influence of *God's Holy Spirit* to direct our thoughts, words, and actions, through the day. For if we go out without his grace, we shall fall a prey to some temptation; but if we ask sincerely, we shall surely obtain grace to help in time of need.

An appeal might here be made to the conscience of the most determined proffigate, whether the neglect of devotion was not the first step to degeneracy in heart and practice. And whether, if he traced back his wickedness from effect to cause, as it grew upon him, he would not come at last to the neglect of the exercises of devotion, as the *beginning* of all his *sin* and *sorrow*.

In the evening also, the face of nature invites to religious sentiments, and renders the mind peculiarly fit for devotion. The hurry of the world ceases, its noise is hushed, and nature itself seems to pause in a delightful calm, that man may recollect himself after the hurry of the day, that his agitated passions may subside, and his mind, without distraction, offer its grateful homage to its Maker. In a word, the evening brings along with it such powerful assistance, and such strong incitements to devotion, that the heart must be thoughtless and sensual indeed, which it does not lead into pious devotion, and dispose to close the day with the pleasant offices of praise and prayer. The calmness of the air, the silence on the face of the earth, the solemnity of the shades of darkness, all conspire to raise and cherish devotion; to bring God, and his power, and his providence, and his wisdom, and his goodness, into the minds of men; and to dispose them to adore, to fear, and to love him. And as the Creator made the face of nature to inspire evening devotion, so it is strongly recommended by the example of our blessed Saviour; for when the crowds were dismissed, and the business of the day was over, he generally retired to offer the evening sacrifice of prayer and praise.

Gratitude should prompt us to acknowledge the goodness of God through the day, to thank him for that food and raiment

which he bestowed; for guarding us from the open violence, and hidden snares of our temporal and spiritual enemies; for shielding us from accidents and infectious diseases; and, above all, for keeping us from ignominy and atrocious crimes, from the pangs, and shame, and punishment of notorious sins. Surely the man who brings home with him at night, from a world so crowded with dangers and temptations, a sound body, a safe character, and a quiet conscience, ought to ascribe it to a higher wisdom than his own—has much reason to adore the kind providence of God, and to say with the Psalmist, "Gracious is the Lord and and righteous, yea, our God is merciful; for thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." When a family meets in the evening from all the places to which their business or amusements have called them; when neither the weakness of the child, nor the rashness of the boy, nor the passions of the man, have given cause for tears; when there is none hurt, none missing, none involved in guilt and ignominy; they must be thoughtless indeed, who do not perceive in this the interposition of an invisible hand; and abominably ungrateful, who do not adore their gracious Preserver, and acknowledge all his benefits.

When they meet, then, in the evening, and retire to their rest, without any thought of God, or acknowledgment of his care and gracious providence, wherein do they distinguish themselves from the brutes in the fold? Like them they have roved about, eaten and drunken through the day; and like them also, when weariness and night overtake them, they tumble down to rest: with this only difference, that the *brute* is blameless for want of capacity, and *they* criminal and ungrateful, for neglecting or abusing the powers and faculties that God has given them.

But further, as evening devotion is due out of gratitude, so it is extremely useful, and very effectual for wearing off those ill impressions that our minds may receive during our intercourse with the world.

For whether we observe it or not, we generally return at night with hearts, in some degree, tainted with some passion or other of the mind; inflamed with some thought in the heart, or some design in the head, that is unwarrantable; and some symptom or other in the soul that its condition is altered for the worse. Evening devotion, therefore, is necessary to repair those injuries that our minds have received during our intercourse with the world.

But evening devotion is still further necessary, in order to make our peace with God. "In many things we all offend;" and besides those flagrant crimes for which our consciences reproach us, there are many sins of thought, word, and deed, which escape our observation during the course of every day. Can we then with a quiet mind lie down under this load of guilt, without so much as supplicating with our families, the forgiveness and mercy of our God? If there be any day in which we commit no sin, any evening in which we need no forgiveness, we may then with more

safety go to sleep without the exercises of devotion. But if even "a righteous man falleth seven times a day," if our consciences tell us, with the Psalmist, that "iniquity prevails against us;" then we should beware of closing our eyes, before we have made our peace with God; lest, like the rich man in the gospel, "we lift up our eyes in hell."

There is something solemn in parting with a day, because we are not sure of another; because it will never return; because it carries many words and actions to our final trial, that we cannot alter; and because we are so much nearer our eternal state.

But if we close every day with devotion, and commit the keeping of our souls and bodies unto God, by humble, fervent prayer, we shall either awake in the fear of God in this world, or in those heavenly habitations where the souls of those who sleep in the Lord Jesus, enjoy perpetual rest and felicity; and at the last, have our perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul, in His eternal and everlasting glory.

Let us, therefore, in imitation of the Psalmist, dedicate our first thoughts in the morning, and our last at night, to the living God, to the concerns of our souls, and the interests of an eternal world. Let us rejoice before God, and praise him, that we have the illustrious privilege, the glorious pre-eminence of the gospel *which has brought life and immortality to light;* let us rejoice and give thanks unto God, that we are not born in an age of ignorance and Paganism, or nursed in folly and superstition; nor the slaves of Heathen idolatry. Let us rejoice that God hath so opened our hearts, and enlightened our understandings, as to make us thoroughly sensible of his goodness in sending down his beloved Son for our redemption, to take our nature upon him, to guide all our steps, to direct all our actions. As we are thankful for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, so, beyond all, let us acknowledge his inestimable love in saving us through Jesus Christ our Lord; in the means of grace, and in the hope of glory; that hope which alone can support us here, and that glory which we have reason to expect hereafter. Let us close every day (as we would certainly wish to close life itself) with earnest supplications to the Throne of Grace, and with commending our souls to the Father of Spirits. To draw nigh to God in the end, when we can have no other resource, and when all other comforts fail us, is not so much devotion as compulsion, and a sort of homage that comes too late, and proceeds too much from necessity, to be either acceptable to God, or beneficial to ourselves. But if we acknowledge his providence, and implore his mercy with the beginning and end of every day, we may hope that he will not disregard our supplications at the last, nor fail to comfort us in the day of our distress. Our continued supplications will not assuredly be disregarded; our constant dependence upon him will not be disappointed; he will direct us by his grace, and protect us by his providence.

10 1/2

THE DUTY

OF

FAMILY DEVOTION.

"And the Lord said,—Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."—*Genesis* xviii. 17, 18, 19.

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THE DUTY

OF

FAMILY DEVOTION.

Though the office in which the master of a family is placed does not usually give him authority over many persons, yet it is a situation of great importance and trust. He is not only to provide the necessaries and conveniencies of life for his children and servants, but on his instructions, his example, and his care, depend, in a great measure, their virtue and honor and happiness here, and their eternal salvation hereafter.

The public precepts and exhortations of the pastor are general, and his private ones can be applied to particular persons only at certain times; and then too, under the disadvantage of an imperfect knowledge as to their temper and wants. But the master of a family, living in one house with those under him, and being always among them, cannot but know what instructions their ignorance, what restraints their vices, and what management their dispositions require. Nor does he want a power proportionate to his knowledge to support and enforce the proper methods of nature and government. His children and servants have, under God, scarce any dependence but on him. He can encourage and correct, can dispense pleasure or pain among them, as he pleases. This cannot but give him all that weight and authority which are necessary to the great ends of his office.

In the next place, his influence commences at that very time when the subjects on which it is to work are the best disposed to be wrought on, and to receive impressions. And if the mind be not seasonably impressed with good principles, and steadily disciplined to virtue in time, it will find out wicked principles and bad habits for itself. To root out these, after they have spread and struck deep into the soil, will be next to impossible, in manhood or old age. Few instances can be produced, of wicked men, who, having been much neglected in their youth, have been afterward reclaimed.

If the influence which the master has in a family be not applied to the good ends and purposes for which it was intended, it cannot but promote the contrary ends. The authority that sets him above his children and servants, makes him a pattern to them, and his actions a rule for theirs. If he does not seem to fear God, nor to worship Him with devotion, neither will they; and when they come to have houses and families of their own, they will be too apt to think they have done very well, if they do as their parents and masters did. So ignorance and

neglect of God's worship, beginning at him, will spread from family to family, will go down from generation to generation, making infidels, and damning souls, for aught he knows, to the end of the world. Now, can a man answer it to his own conscience, his posterity, or his God, that he has perverted the power given him by Divine Providence and nature, for the great purposes of instructing his charge, and training them up to devotion; and employed the whole force of it in propagating the infection of his own evil example among his miserable posterity, and that of his unhappy servants?

It is not easy to conceive how masters of families can so generally get over these reflections; or how they expect to account for the neglect of a duty, on which such an infinite deal depends. Surely, did they believe in, and fear God, or expect a future reckoning; had they either humanity or conscience; they could not give up those who derive their being from them, or who maintain them with their labor, whom God has made, and Christ died for, to almost a certainty of being for ever unhappy! If one who is capable of this crime hath any religion at all, it must be in so scanty a measure as to be of little or no use to himself; for had he enough to save his own soul, it could not possibly be confined to his own breast, when duty and humanity join to call it forth with a voice as loud as God and nature can make it. How could charity or piety be deaf to such a voice?

The footsteps of God, and the signs of religion, are to be found in too few families. How rarely do we see the master of a family bring his children together, to worship and call upon God! What is this owing to? Does he think that he and his can do well, or prosper without God's assistance? or does he imagine that God will favor and protect a family that shows no marks of love, or fear, or dependence upon Him? But if he should say that he and the several members of his family pray in secret, and that such prayers are sufficient; he in vain endeavors to impose an excuse on others, which cannot but be too gross to pass on himself. It is impossible for him to know whether his children and servants do all of them worship God in secret, as often, and as properly as they ought to do; whereas, did he gather them, morning and evening, to family prayers, he could form some judgment of their piety. But supposing it true, that they are all constant in their devotions—is that sufficient? Is there no necessity for *public* worship? Is not a congregation, or a family, as much bound to worship God as a single person? If there be any thing in prayers, or indeed in religion, the worship of God must be as necessary to communities as to individuals. Whatever is capable of offending God, ought to confess and ask pardon if it does. Whatever wants His assistance, ought to call to Him for it. Whatever receives favors from Him, and partakes of His goodness, ought to return Him its thanks. But every society does sin against Him, does

depend on Him, does receive favors, and those infinite ones from Him; every society ought, therefore, as such, to worship Him with repentance, humility, and gratitude.

What shall we think of him who acknowledges that he holds his life, his health, his substance, his all in this world, and his title to eternal glory in the next, from God; that owns he is laid under no hindrances, nor even discouragements to the performance of this duty by the civil power—and yet will not perform it? How different is his practice from that of the prophet Daniel, from that of all the glorious martyrs for Christianity, nay, from his own principles and professions!

He who is truly, and in good earnest, a Christian, considers himself and all that relates to him, or concerns him, as governed and directed by the immediate providence of God, which over-rules and disposes all things. This, as in prudence it ought, makes him constant and fervent in his secret devotions, as the only means, through the merits of his Saviour, to procure the divine favor for himself. This makes him devout in the public services of the congregation, for public blessings to his country. This makes him careful in the performance of family worship, that the only Dispenser of all events may deal graciously by his family. He sees plainly that God has so framed the nature of man, that neither the greater nor the lesser societies, neither kingdoms nor families, can be happy, nor, indeed, at all subsist, without religion: by this necessary dependence on Him, and continual intercourse between Him and us, preserving a perpetual memory of Himself among us. Convinced and fortified with this observation, the truly Christian master of a family takes care that religion be well known, and God constantly worshipped in his house. That his children may be sensible of his authority over them, and pay him the obedience due to a parent, he supports his authority with that of God, the universal Parent. That every member of his little society may acquit himself properly in his station, and contribute to the good of the whole, he gives him a principle to do it on, and a motive strong enough to induce him; that is, he teaches him the doctrines, the duties, and the motives of religion. And that his instructions may not be lodged only in the memory of his dependents, and lie there inactive, like other speculative points, he gives them continual exercise; is perpetually employing and furnishing them with occasions of practice. But that which, of all methods, has the greatest share in preserving his religious instructions alive, and calling them into action, is, that by the daily service to which he assembles his family, he cherishes the sense of religion among them, and keeps God and their duty ever strongly present to their minds.

Where religion is wanting, there is nothing but quarrels, and confusion, and misery to be observed. The mouths of parents are filled with complaints concerning the undutifulness of their children, and those complaints attended with extreme wrath

and bitterness of soul. But did they candidly consider from what cause the ill conduct of their children proceeds, they would, for the most part, find reason to turn their anger upon themselves, and change their complaints to remorse. The disobedience and impiety of their children are owing to want of religion, and that to their parents, who took little or no care to instruct them; and set them an irreligious example beside. They have sinned against the souls of their children, and those children are made, by Divine Providence, the instruments of vengeance to chastise their horrid crime. Natural affection, and mere respect for parental authority, are not sufficient, without religion, to preserve children in their duty. Let no parent trust to them alone; for, if he does, there is ten thousand to one he is miserably disappointed.

We every day hear masters make the like complaints of their servants. They do not, indeed, trouble us with any complaints about their blasphemies, their contempt of God's service, and of the communion; for those are only offences committed against God, and they are not concerned to prevent them. But we hear much of their idleness, their lying, their pilfering, and the like. These are really the most foolish and unjust complaints in the world, and such masters are well served. They expect obedience to *their* commands, without expecting any to those of God; that is, they hope for the effect without the cause, and expect that their servants should be dutiful, though irreligious and ungodly. They might as well hope for the labor of their servants, without allowing them food, as for their honesty and duty, without giving them the principles of either.

Among the many perversions of common sense, none seems more surprising than that unaccountable aversion to family prayers which so unhappily prevails. Can there be any thing more natural than that creatures should worship their Creator? that rational souls should make application to their Redeemer? or that the infirmities of nature should fly to the Spirit of God for comfort and succor? And, as prayer, in general, is most agreeable to nature, so the fellowship of those who are joined to us by the nearest and tenderest ties, cannot but add to the natural pleasure that attends it. A true Christian, though he had neither precedent nor second among all the professors of Christianity, would nevertheless declare, like Joshua, that "he and his house should serve the Lord."* He would not idly and basely wait for examples, when love, gratitude, and such an unspeakable pleasure drew him forward; but would pursue the agreeable duty, encouraged by the satisfaction, and rewarded by the advantage.

Since God is not only the "Judge of all the earth," but the "Governor among the nations;" since "He that made the eye must see, and He that made the ear must hear," why should we

* Joshua xxiv. 15.

not bring our wants before him? Since He is merciful, he must pity our distresses. Since He is infinitely wise and powerful, he can easily find means to relieve them. "For this reason, shall prayer be made ever unto Him, and daily shall He be praised." For this reason, the man who is "wise unto salvation," recommends his labors by day, and his rest by night, to the protection of God, and never thinks either himself or his family safe, till, by earnest prayers, he has put them under the guardianship of Providence. When he sees the wrath of God, that was ready to fall upon the idolatrous Israelites, turned away by the prayer of Moses; when he sees the prayer of Joshua arresting the sun, and stopping the course of nature; when he sees the prayer of Elisha prevail over death, and restore to life the son of the Shunamite; when he sees the prophetical declaration of God reversed, and the life of Hezekiah prolonged by prayer; when he sees Daniel come alive out of the lion's den, after having trusted to prayer, in defiance of the greatest power on earth; he cannot entertain the least doubt concerning the force of prayer. The command, to "pray always,"* adds duty to his hopes, and makes his prayer an act of obedience, as well as a means of preservation. That his family may learn to trust in God, and to call upon Him; that their prayers may have the greater force; that God may be present among them, and His fatherly providence watch over them; he gathers them together, and uniting all their devotions in one request, and one voice, gives them all the weight and power that prayer can have.

It is a grievous reflection, that instances of this kind are so rare. The generality of families have fallen away from God and his service, have given up their dependence upon Him, and sought for protection and support from riches, from policy, from worldly power; not one of which, nor all united, can avail any thing without God; who wields them as so many instruments of His will; who "putteth down one, and setteth up another;" who, with a resistless hand, controls and governs all things.

Such contempt for family prayer, as it is the scandal of any country where it prevails, so it must prove its ruin. Were those who have the fewest means of instruction, accustomed to hear a form of prayer pronounced every day in their houses, they would soon be enabled to commit the principles and duties it contained to memory, and could afterward teach and explain them to their children. But while they hear little or nothing of God and religion in their families, it is no great wonder if they at last almost lose sight of both.

But it is not only the ignorance of religion that is in so great a measure to be charged on the neglect of family worship; the miseries and distresses that afflict families of all kinds, do, in all probability, spring chiefly from this troubled fountain. The uncommon disasters and judgments that fall so remarkably on

* 1 Thess. v. 17; Ephes. vi. 18.

ungodly families, sufficiently show the danger of living without God. Can it be any wonder that God should "pour out his fury upon those that know him not, and upon the families that call not on his name?"

The careless and thriftless poor, who do not worship God in their families, instead of learning to humble themselves before Him, to pray to Him who alone is merciful to hear, and able to deliver; instead of learning to wean their affections from a world in which they have so small a portion, and so little pleasure, and to turn their hearts, and place their confidence in God; have forgot their dependence on Him—have set their affections on things below, and put their confidence in what cannot profit. "Surely they are poor, they are foolish; for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God."

As for the rich, who, though they may have "known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God," have nevertheless neglected this duty, their ingratitude is as great as their folly. No favors can oblige them, no bounties attach them unto God. "They have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds." They have discharged themselves and their families from the service of God. They are "grown proud," and deny Him, and say, "Who is the Lord?" Might not one rather expect that they should say to their wives, their children, and their servants, "Behold what great things the Lord hath done for us! He feedeth us with good things. He poureth his benefits upon us—O come, therefore, let us worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker." Let us confess our sins together with sorrow and shame; let us, with one voice, pray for the continuance of all His mercies; "Let us be thankful unto Him, and speak good of His name; for it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto his name; to tell of his loving-kindness early in the morning, and of his truth in the night season."

Upon the whole of this matter, let every master thus question with himself: Is it not for great ends and reasons that God has placed me at the head of a family? Am I not accountable to Him for the discharge of this important office? Does not the future welfare of my children and servants depend very much upon the education they receive from me? If I do not instruct them in the principles of religion, where shall they get instruction? Is there any thing dearer to me than those who work for me, and depend on me? Can there be a greater crime than to neglect and defraud their very souls? Does not the Providence of God govern the world? Is not God the founder and preserver of societies, and of families in particular? Can they subsist without religion? Shall I not rather take particular care that *my* house serve God by daily prayer? Can any thing I do be so useful to us, as to worship Him on whom I entirely depend? Can any thing be more agreeable than to serve and praise Him to whom we are so infinitely indebted? Shall idle-

ness, or shame, or the scoffs of fools, deprive us of so great a benefit and pleasure, and force me, ungratefully and impiously, to shut out God from my family, to entail ignorance, and contempt of God's worship, on all my posterity and dependents? Shall I put my trust in my own endeavors? Shall I build my hopes upon the sands of this world, and "forsake the Rock of my salvation," where I so plainly perceive the duty, the necessity, and the power of prayer? No! Like the righteous Job, "I will continually sanctify my family, that God may," as he did to him, "make a hedge about me and my house, and about all that I have on every side. We will seek his strength in the time of trouble;" in all our trials will we rely on it, and in our prosperity praise him with pure lips and joyful hearts. "Evening and morning, and at noon, will we pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear our voice."

Die Bischofswürde

bezeugt

durch die heilige Schrift.

Von

Dr. Heinrich U. Onderdonk,
Bischof der protestantisch-bischöflichen Kirche im Staate Pennsylvanien.

Uebersetzt
von
Friedrich von Schmidt.

„Nach dem Gesetz und Zeugniß."—Jesaias 8 : 20.

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Die Bischofswürde

bezeugt

durch die Schrift.

Der Anspruch der Bischofswürde als eine göttliche Stiftung und deßhalb für die Kirche unumgänglich nothwendig zu sein beruht wesentlich auf der Frage: hat sie das Zeugniß der heiligen Schrift für sich? Ist das nicht der Fall, dann hat sie keine bindende Kraft. Ist die Schrift aber dafür, so entsteht die nächste und einzige andere Frage: giebt es noch irgend eine andere Einrichtung des heiligen Amtes, die biblisches Zeugniß aufweisen kann? Giebt es eine solche, so hat auch sie göttliches Recht und muß zugleich mit der Bischofswürde bestehen. Kann aber eine solche nicht gefunden werden, so wird die Bischofswürde allein durch das Ansehen des Wortes Gottes unterstützt.

Eine solche Feststellung des wesentlichen Punktes der episkopalischen Streitfrage ist ganz einfach und diesen Standpunkt sollte man bei jeder Untersuchung dieses Gegenstandes im Auge behalten. Kein Beweisgrund ist werth in Betracht zu kommen, der nicht in einer offenbaren Beziehung zu dieser klaren und einfachen Hauptsache steht —, nämlich zu dem biblischen Zeugniß für die Bischofswürde. Es ist in der That leicht zu bewirken, daß ein einfacher Beweis verwickelt erscheint; stellt doch der Unglaube seine leeren Schatten über die Lehre von einem Gott; webt doch die Zweifelsucht ihre Schleier um das

Zeugniß der Sinne; kann doch der Socinianismus in der heiligen Schrift keinen Beweis dafür finden, daß Christi Tod ein vollkommenes Sühnopfer sei; und stellt doch dieselbe bittre Verfolgung fast allen einfachen Wahrheiten nach, und zwar gewöhnlich je nach Verhältniß ihrer allgemeinen Bekanntschaft oder je nachdem die Beweise dafür mehr oder minder einleuchtend sind. Auch die Bischofswürde entgeht solchen ungerechten Urtheilen nicht. Die einfache und klare Beweisführung für dieselbe wird durch mancherlei fremdartige, nicht zur Sache gehörige Dinge aufgehalten, welche statt das Gemüth im Begreifen dieser großen Wahrheit zu unterstützen, nur dazu dienen es davon abzulenken und mit Fragen anzufüllen, die auf die letzte Entscheidung der Sache durchaus keinen Einfluß haben. Diese Hindernisse müssen wir hinwegschaffen und uns eine freie, ebne Bahn machen, wenn wir mit einfältigem Sinne herantreten wollen an die Prüfung der Bischofswürde durch die Schrift.

Deßhalb wird es die erste Aufgabe dieses Aufsatzes sein, etliche von diesen fremdartigen Einwürfen herauszuheben und zu beweisen, daß sie entweder falsch sind oder nicht hieher gehören. Die nächste Aufgabe wird sodann sein den Schriftbeweis zu führen. Wenig oder gar keine Rücksicht wird hierbei auf die Kirchenväter genommen werden; nicht weil wir ihr Zeugniß unterschätzen, denn es ist von höchstem Werthe zu zeigen, wie die Schriftsteller, die mit dieser Streitfrage in Verbindung stehen, von denen ausgelegt worden sind, welche wußten wie sie von den Aposteln selbst verstanden wurden. Aber der Schreiber dieser Blätter glaubt, daß die Schrift allein die Bischofswürde mit solchem Zeugniß ausrüsten wird, daß ein nicht durch Sophistereien bestochenes Urtheil überzeugt wird und ein vorurtheilsfreies Gewissen sie für unumgänglich nothwendig erachtet.

I.

Um das Urtheil richtig zu leiten und dem Gewissen Klarheit zu verschaffen, müssen alle Einwürfe von

außen her beseitigt werden. Dieses zu bewerkstelligen ist unsre erste Arbeit.

1. Ein Einwurf oder eine Behauptung, die der heiligen Schrift ganz zuwider ist, von welcher aber sehr oft gesagt wird, daß sie Bezug auf die episkopalische Streitfrage habe, ist — daß unser Kirchenregiment einer freien Staatsverfassung feindlich gegenüberstehe. Wir antworten auf diesen Einwurf zuvörderst, daß er nicht hierher gehört, weil die Bischofswürde, wenn sie durch die heilige Schrift festgesetzt ist, Gottes Ordnung ist; und daß folglich freie Staatsverfassungen ihr in diesem Falle unbedingte Duldung gewähren müssen, und die christlichen Bürger insbesondere verpflichtet sind sich ihr zu unterwerfen, denn kein aufrichtiger Mann wird irgend ein menschliches Recht über den Willen Gottes stellen. Sodann antworten wir, daß sich diese Behauptung durch die Erfahrung als falsch ausweist. In diesem Lande könnten oder können früher oder jetzt nicht festere Freunde bürgerlicher Freiheit gefunden werden als in der protestantisch-bischöflichen Kirche; auch giebt es keine Klasse von Menschen, die zu dieser Körperschaft gehören, die nicht Freunde bürgerlicher Freiheit sind; und in Groß-Britanien bleibt gemäß dem Muster der Freiheit, welches dort als verfassungsmäßig angesehen wird, dieselbe Bemerkung wahr. Wir haben aber noch eine dritte Antwort — diese Behauptung ist falsch in ihrer Theorie. Keine freie Verfassung braucht eine ehrbare christliche Benennung zu fürchten, die nicht auf politischer Grundlage ruht und sich nicht in politische Sachen mischt. Sollte irgend eine Benennung versucht werden sich damit abzugeben, so würde ihr das Entgegenwirken des Geistes der Freiheit eine Lektion geben, die in einem Jahrhundert nicht vergessen werden würde. Und da die Episkopalen mehr als die Nicht-Episkopalen dagegen sind im Volke herrschende Meinungen in Umlauf zu setzen, oder Vortheil aus ihnen zu ziehen, so wird dieses kirchliche System vermuthlich schwerer in einen solchen Irrthum fallen. Wenn wir außerdem noch zu dieser Betrachtung hinzufügen, daß alle freien Regierungen, ihrem eigentlichen Wesen gemäß,

wünschen müssen, selbst volksthümlichen Einfluß und volksthümliche Kraft zu behalten, so können wir gewiß annehmen, daß gerade der Episkopat sich vorzüglich für eine freie Verfassung eignet: denn er begehrt nicht entschiedne Volksgunst, sondern überläßt dieses Feld der Bewerbung gänzlich den Staatsmännern. Wieviel Achtung und Ehrfurcht wir auch für unsre Bischöfe fühlen, sie können doch selten, wahrscheinlich nie allgemeine Gunst und öffentlichen Einfluß in irgend einem Theile politischer Sachen erlangen, und keiner von ihnen hat irgend etwas der Art sehr gesucht; außer ihrem kirchlichen Kreise wird ihr Einfluß, ausgenommen derjenige der allen rechtschaffenen Bürgern zukommt, immer nur gering, oder harmlos, oder sehr vorübergehend sein. Ein despotisches Regiment würde den Fall in der That anders finden. Wenn das Volk im Ganzen von, oder durch politische Gewalt geknechtet wird, so wird es in gleichem Maße oder noch mehr der kirchlichen Gewalt unterthan sein; in welchem Falle Bischöfe (gleich allen religiösen Stimmführern) sich zuweilen weniger fügsam beweisen, als eine solche Regierung wünscht. Sind aber solche Dinge nicht vermuthlich eher für diese Sache und ihre wenigen Rechte als dagegen? Und, ob diese Vermuthung gebilligt oder geläugnet wird, das Wirken des Bischofthums unter und mit despotischen Regierungen ist nicht die Sache, um die es sich hier handelt. Wir behaupten daß der Einwurf, daß das Bischofthum in irgend einem Sinne der freien Staatsverfassung ungünstig sei, unrichtig ist, sowohl in der Theorie als auch in der Praxis, und daß die ganze Behauptung nicht zu der Untersuchung gehört — ob die Bischofswürde dem Worte Gottes gemäß sei.

2. Ein andrer von diesen fremdartigen Einwürfen ist der verschiedene Stand in der Frömmigkeit, der erkannt wird durch die gewöhnlichen Merkmale des sittlichen und geistlichen Characters der Glieder, die zu episkopalischen und nicht-episkopalischen Gemeinden gehören. Diese Frage ist zwar an sich selbst höchst wichtig, aber sie hat keinen Bezug auf die Beweisführung für oder gegen die Bischofswürde. Wir haben das Zeugniß unsres Heilan-

des für die gänzliche sittliche und geistliche Unwürdigkeit der Schriftgelehrten und Pharisäer seiner Tage: aber wir haben auch sein Zeugniß, worin er erklärt, daß sie trotz ihres schlechten Characters „säßen auf Moses Stuhl:" (Matth. 23:2.) und daß das Volk deßhalb verbunden sei ihnen zu gehorchen, während es doch vermeiden sollte ihrem üblen Beispiel zu folgen. Angenommen denn, der Leser sei überredet, daß alle Bischöfe in der Welt Heuchler, u. s. w., wären und daß alle bischöflichen Kirchen sich in einem entsprechenden Zustande der Entartung befänden, und die Schrift spräche doch für die Behauptung daß „die Bischöfe sitzen auf der Apostel Stühlen," so wäre es doch, wegen des Zeugnisses solches vorzüglichen Rechtes, in der Ordnung, daß auf den persönlichen Character der Bischöfe oder auf einen wirklichen oder eingebildeten Mangel an Frömmigkeit in den Kirchen, die unter ihrer Leitung stehen, durchaus keine Rücksicht genommen würde. Unser Heiland lehrt in der angegebenen Stelle klar, daß das zwei ganz verschiedene Dinge sind. Bileam war auch ein gottloser Mann, aber doch ein rechter Prophet, (2. Mos. 22:—24; und 31:16.) Die Söhne Eli's hörten, so böse sie waren, doch nicht auf Priester zu sein. (1. Sam. 2.) Die Israeliten im Ganzen waren oft ungehorsam und abgöttisch; aber doch verloren sie niemals ihren Stand als die sichtbare Kirche auf Erden, bis ihre Verfassung aufgehoben ward durch die des Evangeliums. Darum sind diejenigen, welche jetzt behaupten, daß das Bischofthum zum Bestehen einer Kirche wesentlich ist, nicht zu überwinden durch den uns jetzt vorliegenden, fremdartigen Beweisgrund, — den verschiedenen Stand der Episkopalen und Nicht-Episkopalen in Hinsicht der Frömmigkeit. Und obgleich der Schreiber dieses, diese übertriebne Meinung nicht unterschreibt, so hat seine Mäßigung doch keine Aehnlichkeit mit jener unlogischen Ansicht, welche zugiebt, daß die Frage über die verschiedene Frömmigkeit sich aufdringe bei der Untersuchung des einfachen Punktes — ist das Bischofthum in der heiligen Schrift begründet?

Um den Episkopalen in jeder Beziehung Gerechtigkeit widerfahren zu lassen, hält er es für schicklich hinzuzu-

fügen, daß er nicht glaubt, daß sie bei einer Vergleichung ihres Characters mit dem andrer Benennungen Schaden leiden würden.

3. Ein fernerer Einwurf, verwandt mit dem letztgedachten und so wie dieser zu dem biblischen Rechte des Bischofthums in keiner Beziehung stehend, ist — daß die äußerlichen religiösen Einrichtungen doch von geringerer Wichtigkeit seien und daß wir daher alle Bedenken über diesen Gegenstand fallen lassen könnten. Daß es nun im Worte Gottes Dinge von größerer und Dinge von geringerer Wichtigkeit giebt, ist keine Frage; und daß die Sünde der Unterlassung einer kleineren Pflicht nicht so schwer ist, als die des Unterlassens einer größeren, wird zugegeben. Doch die kleinste Sünde bleibt Sünde. Vielleicht gab es keinen Theil des alten Gesetzes, der tiefer stand auf der Leiter der Wichtigkeit als „zu geben Zehnten von der Münze, dem Till und dem Kümmel;" und doch erklärte unser Heiland den Juden, daß auch dieses eine Pflicht sei „die man nicht lassen sollte." (Matth. 23 : 23; Luk. 11 : 42.) — Kann denn das Bischofthum, wenn es gleich als eine Sache der ganz äußerlichen Ordnung betrachtet wird, noch geringer angeschlagen werden, als diese unbedeutenden Zehnten? Wenn nicht, so hat es genügenden Anspruch in Betrachtung zu kommen; so hoch wir nun die Verpflichtung schätzen uns dem Bischofthum zu unterwerfen, so ist es doch für den gegenwärtigen Theil unsrer Betrachtung genug, daß es nicht aus der Acht gelassen werden darf.

4. Eine anscheinend entsetzliche, doch auch nicht hergehörige Schwierigkeit, die oft erhoben wird, ist — daß die Episkopalen alle nicht-episkopalischen Benennungen als unkirchlich verschreien. Von dem Schreiber dieses wird diese Folgerung nicht gebilligt. Wenn man sie aber auch in ihrer weitesten Ausdehnung zugiebt, welche Beziehung hat sie auf die Wahrheit des einfachen Satzes, daß das Bischofthum eine göttliche Ordnung ist? Eine solche Folgerung ist, da sie die Ausschließung würdiger Leute von dem Bunde mit Gott in sich schließt, welche ihrerseits darin zu stehen glauben, ohne Zweifel mit langwierigen

Untersuchungen verbunden, die für beide Parteien von Wichtigkeit sind: doch so ist es mit manchen unläugbaren Wahrheiten. Betrachtungen dieser Art können eine so richtige Behauptung nicht anfechten. — Einige andre Betrachtungen, nicht ohne Werth, mögen hier für sich selbst sprechen. Wenn Hiob zur Zeit Moses oder später lebte, so war er nicht in der Kirche, und doch war er ein ausgezeichnet frommer und von Gott begnadigter Mann: und dasselbe mag mit einigen Abänderungen von seinen Freunden gesagt werden. Bileam war nicht in der Kirche und doch ein inspirirter Prophet. Jethro, der Schwiegervater des Moses, ein Diener des wahren Gottes, an dessen Opferfesten Moses, Aaron und die Aeltesten von Israel Theil nahmen (2. Mos. 18:11, 12) war nicht in der Kirche. Die Nachkommen Jethros, welche mit Israel lebten, (Richt. 1:16; 4:11,) und den Segen der göttlichen Weissagungen theilen mußten, gehörten, wie uns bedünkt, nicht zur Kirche, sondern waren, wenigstens während einiger Jahrhunderte unbeschnitten: und also unter dem Namen der Rechabiten lebte dieses Volk, obgleich nicht von Israel, doch mit Israel und nannte sich selbst „Fremde;" wurde aber von Gott zu derselben Zeit, als er ein strenges Gericht über seine Kirche oder sein Bundesvolk ergehen ließ, höchlich gelobt.* Das Ansehen, welches die andern Proselyten des Thores genossen, ist eine fernere Erläuterung zu demselben Zwecke — nämlich daß, obgleich alle die das Evangelium hören, verbunden sind durch die Taufe in die Kirche einzutreten, die Schrift für die Behauptung spricht, daß, wenn einige, die bei ihren Irrthümern redlich sind, denken sollten, sie seien nicht dazu verpflichtet, solche würdige Bekenner der wahren Religion, auch außer dem Schooß der Kirche, von Gott angenommen werden. Darum, wenn wir den Einwurf

* Jer. 35. Sollte irgend einer unsrer Leser der Meinung sein, daß die Nachkommen Jethro's beschnitten gewesen seien und zur Kirche gehört hätten, so wird er gebeten, soviel von dem obigen Beweise, als zu dieser Frage gehört, wegzulassen: denn es gewährt nur eine beiläufige Erläuterung des Gegenstandes, ohne die mindeste Beziehung auf unsern gegenwärtigen Punkt zu haben.

auch in seiner weitesten Ausdehnung betrachten, so ist er doch nicht von der Art uns von der uns geziemenden Betrachtung abzulenken. Zu sagen, daß andre christliche Benennungen nicht zur Kirche gehören, schließt in keinem Sinne in sich, daß sie von der Gnade Gottes durch den Heiland ausgeschlossen seien — oder, daß sie in sittlichem oder geistlichem Charakter niedriger stünden als die Kirche — oder auch, daß sie in diesen Beziehungen nicht höher stehen könnten, als die Glieder derselben. Dennoch kann keins von diesen Zugeständnissen, sogar angenommen, daß auch das letzte derselben gemacht worden wäre, aufheben die göttliche Einsetzung der Kirche, den göttlichen Befehl an „alle Völker," und folglich an die ganze Menschheit, sich mit ihr zu verbinden, oder das biblische Zeugniß für das Bischofthum, der von Gott geheiligten Einrichtung ihres Predigtamtes.

Manche Episkopalen läugnen die Unkirchlichkeit derer, welche die episkopalische Einrichtung der heiligen Ordnungen nicht anerkennen. Die Gründe dafür schlagen nicht in das Gebiet der Streitfrage. Sie denken, daß das Bischofthum ein ganz eigenthümlicher Gegenstand ist, der daher auch besonders in der Schrift aufgeführt und besonders dort untersucht wird. Sie denken, daß seine biblischen Rechte so einleuchtend bewiesen werden können, daß seine Verwerfung als eine offenbare Uebertretung des Wortes Gottes, der uns in demselben gegebenen Winke in Betreff seines Willens in dieser Sache. Und wenn dieser Hauptbeweis für den vor uns liegenden Punkt dargelegt werden kann, welcher ernste und gewissenhafte Gläubige wird noch nach irgend einem andern Zeugniß oder nach anderen Sachen, die er mit in sich schließt, fragen, die mit der bischöflichen Frage in reiner wesentlichen Verbindung stehen?

5. Wir schreiten nun zu einer andern fremdartigen Sache, auf welcher, obgleich sie kaum dem Ansehen nach wahrscheinlich ist, von beiden Parteien, hinsichtlich dieser Streitfrage, in fast gleicher Weise hartnäckig bestanden wird. Es ist — die Anführung des Zeugnisses solcher Personen, welche, obgleich sowohl in der Gelehrsamkeit als

in der Frömmigkeit ausgezeichnet, doch wenigstens scheinen sich selbst oder ihrer anerkannten Regel über die bischöfliche Sache widersprochen zu haben; und welche deßhalb von jeder Seite, der ihre wechselnden Ansichten dienen können, in den Vorgrund gestellt werden. Doch ist es nun nicht klar, daß der einzige Zweck der Berufung auf solche Zeugnisse darin besteht, die geordnete Untersuchung und die unbefangene Erforschung der Wahrheit zu hintertreiben? Wenn die in Rede stehenden Schriftsteller sich selbst, oder den Regeln, zu welchen sie sich bekannt haben, unbedingt widersprechen, so ist ihr Zeugniß in diesem Falle nichtig; wenn es den Anschein hat, als thäten sie es, so hören ihre Meinungen auf unwiderleglich zu sein, deßhalb sollten sie von Allen aufgegeben werden. Die Beständigkeit solcher Männer ist eine Untersuchung für ihre Biographen; sie mag den Kirchen zustehen, welche sie als Leiter anerkennen; doch steht sie gewiß in keiner Beziehung zu der gegenwärtigen Sache, welche die Rechte des Episkopates und der Gleichheit betrifft. Eine ähnliche Regel sollte auf alle Fälle der Ungewißheit oder Unbestimmtheit in Betreff irgend einer Wahrheit angewendet werden. Männer, im höchsten Grade der Bildung, der Rechtschaffenheit und des öffentlichen Vertrauens stehend, sind nicht nur fehlbar, sondern befinden sich oft in der Lage solcher Bestürzung, daß sie sich für eine Meinung aussprechen oder einen Gang des Verhaltens wählen, vielleicht ohne genügende Untersuchung oder Einsicht in die Sache; welche Meinung oder welches Verhalten sich entweder zur selbigen Zeit oder späterhin als mit ihren besser erwogenen Uriheilen etwas im Widerspruche stehend, herausstellen wird. Besonders im öffentlichen Leben sind solche Schwierigkeiten sehr gefährlich. Der Schreiber dieses will die Mißgriffe dieser Art, in welche die ausgezeichneten Personen, die er im Sinne hat, gefallen sein können, nicht als solche Fehler betrachten, über welche Menschen zu richten berufen sind, und die sie noch viel weniger vergrößern oder verkleinern dürfen, sondern er denkt, daß es genügend ist, wenn er sie nicht nachahme; ihr und unser Meister gedenkt in Gnaden,

(wir zweifeln nicht daran) daß wir alle nur Staub sind. Die meisten der hervorragenden Reformatoren müssen in Bezug auf diesen Gegenstand unter diese Klasse gezählt werden, so Luther, Melanchthon, Cranmer, Calvin, Beza, —wir haben nicht nöthig die Liste weiter auszudehnen;— sie alle waren in der Sache des Bischofthums etwas unbeständig; zwar vielleicht nicht so sehr um ein billiges oder mindestens ein mildes Urtheil über sie zu sprechen; doch genug um das Zeugniß ihrer eigenthümlichen Ansichten in Bezug auf die schriftmäßige Verfassung des Predigtamtes zu entkräften. Eine andere Klasse erleuchteter und frommer Männer ist noch unbeständiger gewesen; diejenigen, welche zur (englisch-) bischöflichen Kirche gehörend, und in ihren verschiedenen Graden des Predigtamtes (selbst den höchsten nicht ausgenommen) wirkend, doch Freunde der Gleichheit waren, oder wenigstens der Bischofswürde, in oder unter welcher sie wirkten, nicht geneigt waren. In Bezug auf diese, mag auch zugegeben werden, daß Episkopalen sie eben nicht anklagen dürfen. Aber man führe sie nicht als solche an, die in dieser Streitfrage Gewicht haben, denn nein, sie haben nicht das mindeste; denn wie rein auch die Beweggründe ihrer Unbeständigkeit gewesen sein mögen, so ist doch ihre unvortheilhafte Sinnesart zu offenbar, um ihren Ansichten über diesen Gegenstand, als solchen, bei einem unparteiischen Sinne, das mindeste Gewicht einzuräumen. Eine dritte Klasse möge hier noch hinzugefügt werden; die, welche ihre wohlerwogenen Ansichten in Betreff der Ansprüche des Bischofthums wechselten, unter welchen Bischof Stillingfleet hervorragt. Vielleicht sollte in solchen Fällen die letztere, reiflicher erwogene Ansicht als die frühere, nun abgeschworne überwiegend betrachtet werden. Doch wir ziehen vor sie beide bei Seite zu setzen, als solche, die nichts von dem Gewichte haben, das den besondern Aussprüchen der Gelehrten gebührt. In der That, die Beweisgründe aller obigen Klassen von Personen mögen werth sein so viel als sie wollen, und mögen auch, wenn sie nicht widerlegt worden sind, von Neuem angeführt werden, und was sie auf ihre hierher gehörigen öffentlichen

Grundsätze bauten, oder was sie zugestanden auf dieselben zu bauen, kann nicht zurückgenommen werden bis es so offenbar geläugnet wird, als es festgestellt war. Doch darf man nicht meinen, daß ihre persönlichen Meinungsveränderungen, oder ihre Schwankungen, oder ihre Zugeständnisse, irgend ein Gewicht für oder gegen irgend eine Partei hätten.* Darum verwerfen wir dieses ganze fremdartige Anhängsel zu der uns vorliegenden Streitfrage. Der Erforscher der Wahrheit hat nichts damit zu thun. Mögen sich die Bewunderer dieser ausgezeichneten Leute bemühen die kleinen, dadurch auf ihrem Andenken ruhenden Schatten hinwegzuklären; es ist ein edles, es ist sogar ein frommes Unternehmen und es mag in einigen Fällen, in Bezug auf persönliche Ehrenrettung, genügend ausgeführt worden sein. Doch nichts von dieser Art kann ihnen einen Rang als Autoritäten, oder als Führer in dieser Streitfrage verschaffen.

Wir berufen uns wegen der Richtigkeit der obigen Regel auf jeden gerechten und unbefangenen Sinn und wollen noch hinzufügen — daß diese Regel sich ebensowohl auf die Väter, als auf die späteren Zierden der Kirche bezieht. Wenigstens einer unter den Vätern hat über das Bischofthum in einer widersprechenden Weise geschrieben. Doch wird es in der That mit Widerstreben geschehen, daß unsre nicht-episkopalischen Brüder Hieronymus, ihren größten, wenn nicht einzigen Zeugen unter diesen alten

* Sollte der Schluß gemacht werden, daß wir aus der Unbeständigkeit, womit sich diese gelehrten und frommen Männer ausgedrückt haben, ihren Glauben an die Unwichtigkeit oder Ungewißheit des hier verhandelten Punktes folgern könnten — so antworte ich, daß sich ein solcher Schluß nicht durch die Voraussetzungen rechtfertigt. Wenn diese ausgezeichneten Personen die Frage für unnütz erachtet hätten, so würden sie es offen gesagt haben. Oder wenn einige von ihnen derartige Winke geben, so ist das eine besondere Frage, die nicht zu der einen, nun vor uns liegenden gehört, und die wir in einem vorhergehenden Paragraphen (unter No. 3.) beantwortet haben. Alle diese Personen stehen im Allgemeinen auf Seite der Bischofswürde, nur hängen sie nicht unerschütterlich fest daran. Der rechte Schluß ist deßhalb, entweder, daß sie nicht ganz beständig waren, oder daß sie nicht hinlängliche Kenntnisse oder hinlänglichen geistlichen Unterricht über diesen Gegenstand hatten. Nehmt irgend eine Ansicht von ihrer Lage, und es wird sich herausstellen, daß ihre Meinungen, als solche, kein Gewicht in unsrer Streitfrage haben können.

christlichen Schriftstellern, aufgeben. Doch es wird schwer zu zeigen sein, daß er in seinen Anschauungen des Bischofthums in keiner Weise wankelmüthig war; es wird unmöglich sein, es in solcher Weise zu beweisen als ohne Zweifel beansprucht werden kann, um für beide Parteien überzeugend zu sein. Da wir dieses selbst glauben, und auch glauben, daß es den Meisten, die gehörig unterrichtet sind, als selbstverständlich erscheinen wird, so wenden wir uns an das ruhige und gewissenhafte Urtheil des Lesers:— ob nicht die Meinungen des Hieronymus bei Seite gesetzt werden müssen, als solche die kein Gewicht in der jetzt vor uns liegenden Sache haben. Seine Meinungen, sagen wir, denn er behauptet nach seiner persönlichen Kenntniß nichts als eine Thatsache und vieles von dem, was er behauptet, steht mit dem Zeugnisse früherer Väter in Widerspruch.

6. Der letzte Einwurf, den wir anführen werden als einen, wenn auch sehr wahrscheinlichen, doch die letzte Entscheidung unsrer Streitfrage nicht anfechtenden, ist—daß, obwohl die in der Schrift berichteten Beispiele zu Gunsten des Bischofthums eingeräumt werden möchten, dieses Regiment doch trotzdem nicht ausdrücklich befohlen wird. Nun dieser Einwurf mag von uns vollkommen zugegeben werden ohne den endlichen Erfolg unsrer Sache zu gefährden. Wir sagen, mag zugegeben werden, denn wenn man dem Bischofthum zugiebt das in der Schrift empfohlene Muster zu sein, so war es, wie sich von selbst versteht, das Muster, auf welches der Apostel hinwies, wenn er die Brüder aufforderte „zu gedenken an die, zu gehorchen und zu folgen denen, welche ihre Lehrer waren, die ihnen das Wort Gottes gesagt hatten und wachten über ihre Seelen;" (Hebr. 13: 7, 17.) welche Stellen in solchem Falle, wie wir als gewiß annehmen können, ein inspirirter Befehl wären im Predigtamt, eingerichtet nach dem episkopalischen Muster anzuerkennen.* Ohne diesen Beweisgrund auf-

* Diese Behauptung mag dem deutschen Leser fremdartig klingen, wird ihm aber sofort einleuchten, wenn er sich die Mühe giebt den griechischen Urtext mit der englischen sowohl als mit der deutschen Uebersetzung (Luthers) zu vergleichen. Im Griechischen heißt es: "Πειθεσθετοῖς ἡγουμένοις" ꝛc.

zugeben können wir in dem gegenwärtigen Gange unsrer Erörterung doch auch ohne denselben fortfahren.

Möge denn irgend ein gerechter und gewissenhafter Gläubiger sprechen, ob nicht ein bloßer Wink, oder eine Andeutung, enthalten in der Schrift (doch immer diejenigen ausgenommen, welche sich auf Sachen oder Verhältnisse beziehen, die als vorübergehend erklärt werden, oder es ihrem Wesen nach sind,) obgleich sie nicht die Kraft eines ausdrücklichen Befehls hat, für jeden Diener Gottes bindend genug ist? St. Paulus sagt von den Heiden, „diese, obwohl sie das Gesetz nicht haben, sind ihnen selbst ein Gesetz;" (Röm. 2:14.) sie hatten nicht das positive, geoffenbarte Gesetz, aber das Licht der Natur, welches nur andeutet was wir thun müssen, es aber nicht ausdrücklich befiehlt, war ihnen „ein Gesetz," das hinlängliche Verbindlichkeit hatte seine Rathschläge ihnen zur Pflicht zu machen, und diesen Rathschlägen volle Gewalt in „ihrem Gewissen" zu geben; und wahrlich die Winke, die Gott in seinem Worte niedergelegt hat, sind in ihrer Verpflichtung nicht geringer als die durch seine Werke an die Hand gegebenen. Lasset uns einige Beispiele nehmen.

Während dem ganzen vorsündfluthlichen und patriarchalischen Zeitalter war kein Gebot verzeichnet einen Sabbath zu halten; wird denn nun behauptet, daß die bloße Erklärung daß Gott „segnete und heiligte den siebenten Tag" (1. Mos. 2:3.) nicht hinreichend darlegte, daß es der Wille Gottes war, daß der siebente Tag heilig gehalten werden sollte? Wiederum war in jener ganzen früheren

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Das übersetzt Luther mit „Gehorchet euren Lehrern." Die episkopalischen Uebersetzer aber geben es mit "Obey themselves to those who had the rule over you." Daß sie die eigentliche Bedeutung des Wortes „ἡγουμένος" treuer festgehalten haben als Luther sieht jeder klar, der die griechische Sprache auch nur einigermaßen versteht. Wie sich nun aus dieser wortgetreuen Uebersetzung die Behauptung des hochwürdigen Verfassers rechtfertigt, bedarf keiner Erklärung. Nur das wollen wir für diejenigen Leser, die vielleicht der englischen Sprache nicht kundig sind, noch hinzufügen, daß die englische Uebertragung der Stelle in deutscher Fassung wörtlich so lautet: „Gehorchet denen, welche die Herrschaft über euch haben." (Anm. des Uebersetzers.)

Periode kein Gebot verzeichnet, den Gebrauch des Opfers zu beobachten und dadurch den Glauben an die große Wahrheit auszudrücken, daß die Sünde nur durch die Vergießung von Blut hinweggenommen wird; sollen wir darum annehmen, wird es von einigen derer angenommen werden, deren Hauptstreit mit uns das Bischofthum betrifft, daß die Berichte von dem Beispiel Abel's im vorsündlichen Zeitalter, und von dem Noah's, Abraham's und Anderer in späterer Zeit keine hinlänglichen Andeutungen Gottes wären, daß es eine Pflicht wäre dieses sakramentale Sühnopfer darzubringen?* Und wiederum, wird ein demüthiger Christ leugnen, daß die bloße Thatsache der Erschaffung eines Mannes und eines Weibes für einander, genügend ist um zu beweisen, daß Vielweiberei dem Willen Gottes zuwider ist. (1. Mos. 1:27; 2:24:2; Mal. 2:15; Matth. 19:4, 5; Mark. 10:6.)

Doch laßt uns zum Neuen Testament übergehen. Da giebt es keinen bestimmten Befehl für die Kindertaufe; aber ihre Aehnlichkeit mit der Beschneidung, (Col. 2:11, 12; Röm. 4:11, 16; Gal. 3:7;) die Erklärung, daß kleine Kinder Vorbilder für die Bekehrung sind, (Matth. 18:3;) die Weisung zu dulden, daß sie zu Christo kämen, da solchen das Himmelreich gehöre, (Mark. 10:14; Matth. 19:14; Luk. 18:16;) die Berichte von der Taufe von „Häusern" oder Familien, (Apostelgesch. 16:15, 33; 1 Cor. 1 16;) und die Erklärung, daß „Kinder heilig (oder, daß sie Heilige) sind," (1 Cor. 7:14) — ist das Alles nicht hinreichend, entweder als Beispiel oder als Andeutung, um uns von dem inspirirten Befehl in dieser Sache zu überführen und uns zu ermächtigen, die

* Wenn behauptet wird, daß die „Felle" (1. Mos. 3:21.) in welche Gott Adam und Eva kleidete, von geopferten Thieren waren, und daß der Bericht von jener Thatsache einer göttlichen Bestimmung und einem bestimmten Befehle gleichkomme, so geben wir die Thatsache zu, läugnen aber, daß die Folgerungen daraus die nämlichen sind. Alles was aus jener Stelle hervorgeht ist ein Beispiel des Opfers. Die Verbindlichkeit und Dauer des Gebrauchs, wie sie in den andern Fällen erwähnt werden, werden aus jenem Beispiele nur angenommen. Dieser Bericht ist aber eine Andeutung in Bezug auf eine solche Pflicht! doch eine Andeutung von solcher Art war, wir bestehen darauf, eine befehlende.

Kindertaufe als auf biblischem Zeugniß beruhend zu betrachten? Und wird nicht dieselbe Art der Beweisführung entscheidend sein in Betreff der Verlegung des Tages der Ruhe und Andacht vom siebenten Tag auf den ersten? (Joh. 20:1, 26. Akt. 2:1—4. 20:7. 1 Cor. 16:2. Offenb. 1:10.)

Nun, um alle diese Sätze anzuwenden: Wird, wenn die obigen Erläuterungen gehörig erwogen werden, zu viel beansprucht, wenn behauptet wird, daß das bloße Beispiel der apostolischen Kirche, in Bezug auf das Muster des heiligen Predigtamtes, als eine Andeutung des göttlichen Willens, ohne irgend eine ausdrückliche Bestätigung verpflichtend ist? Und wenn jenes aus der Schrift abgeleitete Beispiel nun eben das Bischofthum wäre, wahrlich, da wäre Bischofthum besser als Gleichheit — wenn die Vergleichung der gesunden Auslegung das Bischofthum immer ein wenig mehr begünstigt, als irgend eine andere Einrichtung — wird dann die Pflicht sich, wenn es möglich ist, einem solchen Predigtamte zu unterwerfen, umgangen werden können? kann in diesem Falle solcher Gehorsam von dem Urtheil eines reinen Gewissens und Herzens verweigert werden?

Die obigen Bemerkungen, wenn ihnen das gebührende Gewicht zugestanden wird, werden die vor uns liegende Streitfrage sehr vereinfachen, und werden uns helfen vermittelst eines klaren Urtheils und einer unbestochenen Liebe zur Wahrheit die Stellung der Schrift zu derselben zu erforschen. Darum laßt jetzt alle fremdartigen Dinge vergessen sein; laßt keines von ihnen wieder hervortreten während dieser Untersuchung.

II.

Indem wir nun zum zweiten Theil unsres Aufsatzes — einer Darlegung des biblischen Zeugnisses, das zu dieser Streitfrage gehört, übergehen — beginnen wir damit, daß wir den richtigen Standpunkt zur Sache ein-

nehmen. Indem wir nun den geringen Anspruch der Laienordination und eines Laienpriesterthums übergehen, der, wie wir glauben, selbst nicht einmal beanspruchen wird, auf irgend einem Befehl oder Vorbild der heiligen Schrift zu beruhen, setzen wir den Ausgangspunkt einzig zwischen die beiden Systeme des Bischofthums und der Gleichheit oder des presbyterischen Predigtamtes.*

Die Presbyterianer sagen, daß es nur eine Ordnung von Männern giebt, die bevollmächtigt sind geweihte Dinge zu verrichten, daß alle in dieser Ordnung auf gleicher Stufe stehen und folglich gleiche geistliche Rechte haben. Die Freunde des Bischofthums aber behaupten, daß das christliche Predigtamt in drei Ordnungen von Anfang eingesetzt worden ist, welche immer seit dem apostolischen Zeitalter mit den Namen Bischöfe, Priester oder Aelteste, und Diakonen bezeichnet wurden; und von welchen der höchsten allein das Recht der Ordination, der Confirmation, der allgemeinen Oberaufsicht in einer Diöcese, und das der höchsten Verwaltung der geistlichen Zucht zukommt, so wie ihr außerdem alle Rechte der andern Grade gehören.

Die gegenwärtige Untersuchung betrifft also die Oberherrschaft der Bischöfe, und die Rechte der nächsten Ordnung werden nur so weit beschränkt, daß sie mit denen der höchsten nicht im Widerspruche stehen, daher brauchen wir unsre Schriftforschung nur über das auszudehnen, was zu diesem Hauptpunkte gehört. Wenn wir die Ansprüche des bischöflichen Amtes nicht beweisen können, so müssen wir auch die unsrer Diakonen aufgeben und alle Macht auf das Amt der Priester beschränkt sein lassen. Aber, wenn wir die Rechte des höchsten kirchlichen Amtsgrades begründen können, so kann wenig Streit sein über das Maß heiliger Gewalt, welches von uns dem mittlern und untersten

* Andere Benennungen außer denen, die Presbyterianer genannt werden, haben ebenfalls die presbyterianische Ordination, wie die Congregationalisten, Baptisten und Andere. Auch die Ordination der Lutheraner und Methodisten ist presbyterianisch, denn Luther und Wesley (und Dr. Coke, die Quelle der methodistischen Ordinationen in diesem Lande) sind nur Presbyter gewesen.

Grade zugewiesen wird. Dieses ist eine fernere Klärung unsrer Beweisführung, zwar nicht von wirklich fremdartigen Dingen, doch von Untersuchungen, die verhältnißmäßig von geringerer Wichtigkeit sind.

Der Hauptpunkt ist also nun — ob die Priester (oder bestimmter die Priester allein) ein biblisches Recht zum Ordiniren haben, oder ob das Amtiren eines Geistlichen, der einen höhern Rang als den priesterlichen hat, nicht wesentlich ist zur ordnungsmäßigen Verwaltung dieser Handlung? Auf welchem Wege diese große Sache auch entschieden werden mag, so sind doch alle untergeordneten Fragen mit ihr verbunden, wenn auch nicht nothwendigerweise, so doch darum, weil es dann für keine Partei mehr der Mühe werth sein wird, über sie zu streiten.

Da einige Leser dieses Aufsatzes vielleicht nicht genau mit der episkopalischen Streitfrage bekannt sind, so ist es nöthig auf die Thatsache hinzuweisen, daß der Name Bischof, welcher nur den höchsten Grad des heiligen Amtes bezeichnet, in der heiligen Schrift nicht diesem Amte zugeeignet wird. Dieser Name wird dort der mittlern Ordnung oder den Priestern gegeben, und alles was wir im Neuen Testamente in Bezug auf „Bischöfe"* lesen (folglich auch mit Einschluß der Worte „Aufseher" und „Aufsicht," (Akt. 20:28; 1. Petr. 5:2,) die denselben Ursprung haben) ist als zu dem mittlern Grad gehörig zu betrachten. Der höchste Grad befindet sich dort bei denen, die „Apostel"† genannt werden, und bei einigen andern Personen, wie Titus, Timotheus‡ und den „Engeln" der

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* 1. Phil. 1:1; 1. Tim. 3:12; 1. Tim. 1:7. In 1. Petr. 2:25 wird das Wort Bischof auf unsern Erlöser angewendet; so wie das Wort Diener [Diakonus] in Römer 15:8; und „Apostel" Hebr. 3:1. Es ist bemerkenswerth, daß in der letzten Stelle „Apostel und Hohepriester" mit einander verbunden werden, sowie „Bischof und Hirt" oder Pastor in der ersten.

† Daß die Apostel allein ordinirt haben, wird bewiesen werden. In 1. Cor. 4:19—21; V. 3—5; 2. Cor. 2:6, 7:12; 10:8; 13:2, 10; und 1 Tim. 1:20 sind Zuerkennungen und Zurücknahmen von Kirchenstrafen erwähnt, die durch einen Apostel ausgeübt wurden, oder Drohungen von Seiten eines solchen Mannes, obgleich es in Corinth Aelteste geben mußte, und in Ephesus wirklich gab.

‡ Von Timotheus wird gewöhnlich angenommen, daß ihm der Name

sieben Gemeinden in Kleinasien, welchen keine amtliche Bezeichnung gegeben wird. Alle diese Sätze werden im weitern Verlauf dieses Aufsatzes genügend erwiesen werden.

Es geschah nach dem apostolischen Zeitalter, daß der Name „Bischof" der zweiten Ordnung genommen und der ersten zugeeignet wurde, wie wir von Theodoretus, einem der Väter, lernen. Auf den ersten Blick mag die Schwierigkeit, die wegen der Namen der heiligen Ordnungen entsteht, furchtbar erscheinen; wenn wir aber das gesuchte Ding, nämlich ein höheres Amt als das der Priester oder Aeltesten finden können, so brauchen wir uns an seinen Namen nicht zu kehren. Unregelmäßigkeit in Titeln und Bezeichnungen kommt so häufig vor und giebt doch so wenig Gelegenheit zu wirklichen Verwirrungen, daß sie in dem uns vorliegenden Falle nicht als eine wirkliche Schwierigkeit zu betrachten sein dürfte. Es wimmelt von Beispielen in dieser Sache.

Die ursprüngliche Meinung von „Kaiser" (imperator) bezeichnete nur einen General, doch späterhin ward dieser Titel den Monarchen beigelegt; und die ursprüngliche Meinung von „Bischof" war nur „Priester," doch der Name ging von dem mittleren Grade zu dem höchsten über. Wiederum giebt es einen „Präsidenten" der Vereinigten Staaten, „Präsidenten" der Collegien, und „Präsidenten" von Gesellschaften; es giebt einen „Gouverneur" des Staats, einen „Gouverneur" des Gefängnisses; es giebt „Diener" des Staates und „Diener" der Religion; es giebt „Provosten" von Collegien und Kriegs-„Provosten;" es giebt „Aelteste" (Senatoren) in der Gesetzgebung, „Aelteste" (Aldermänner) in einem Stadtregiment, „Aelteste" (Priester) in der Kirche, und Laien-„Aelteste" in verschiedenen Benennungen; es gab „Consulen" in Rom und in Frankreich, welche die höchsten Staatsbeamten waren, und es giebt „Consulen," welche nur schlichte kaufmännische Agenten sind.

„Apostel" in der Schrift nicht gegeben werde, und unser hier gegebener Beweis bequemt sich dieser Annahme an.

Es giebt „Capitäne," die in der Armee auf einer gewissen Stufe stehen, „Capitäne" zur See mit einem viel höheren Range und „Capitäne" von gar keinem gesetzlichen Range; die Worte "Monsieur" und "Madame" „sind (oder waren) die höchsten Titel am französischen Hofe und zugleich sind sie der gewöhnliche Ausdruck der Hochachtung unter allen Klassen des Volkes.

Hier, könnte man sagen, ist eine fast unbegrenzte Verwirrung der Namen oder Titel; doch ist die Verwirrung nur eine scheinbare, denn im Gebrauch derselben giebt es durchaus keine wirkliche oder thatsächliche Schwierigkeit. Die Gewohnheit macht alles leicht und klar. Ein wenig Erwägung und der praktische Gebrauch wird manchen unserer Leser befähigen sich in der heiligen Schrift nach den verschiedenen heiligen Aemtern umzusehen, unbekümmert um die Namen, die ihnen dort oder anderswo beigelegt werden.

Darum lasset uns immer in Uebereinstimmung mit manchen der oben angeführten Beispiele sagen, es giebt Bischöfe einzelner Gemeinden und Bischöfe ganzer Diözesen; und wenn wir im Neuen Testamente den Namen „Bischof" finden, so müssen wir dafür halten, daß er einen Bischof einer einzelnen Pfarrei, oder einen Priester bezeichnet; aber den Bischof einer Diözese,* oder den höchsten Grad des heiligen Amtes, müssen wir daselbst nicht unter diesem Namen und überhaupt ohne Rücksicht auf irgend einen Namen suchen. Wir forschen nach der Sache, dem Vorhandensein einer Ordnung, die höher steht als die der Priester: der Name ist nicht der geringsten Untersuchung würdig.

Der Unterschied zwischen den Unterkönigen Herodes, Archelaus und Agrippa und dem Oberkönig (Cäsar zu Rom, Matth. 2:1, 22; Akt. 26:2; 17:7; Joh. 19:15) war wenigstens eben so groß, als der zwischen den Priester-Bischöfen der Schrift und den Bischöfen, welche auf die Apostel folgten; aus dem bloßen Titel König, der Allen

* Einer der die Macht hat mehrere Kirchen und Geistliche zu regieren, habe er nun eine bestimmte Diözese oder nicht.

gemein, ging durchaus nicht hervor, daß sie alle auf einer Stufe standen.

Besonders verdient in Rücksicht auf die Anwendung der Namen eine Unregelmäßigkeit beachtet zu werden. Das Wort „Sabbath" wird in der Schrift nur auf den jüdischen Ruhetag angewendet; jetzt bezeichnet es aber, wenn es im gewöhnlichen Leben gebraucht wird, den Tag des Herrn. Jetzt ist der „Sabbath" von der Christenheit abgeschafft, und die Haltung desselben wird gemißbilligt, (Col. 2:16, 17; Gal. 4:10;) und doch ermahnen Geistliche christlicher Benennungen beständig ihre christlichen Gemeinden zu halten „den Sabbath." Entsteht eine Verwirrung des Sinnes von dieser Verwirrung der Namen? wir denken nicht. Alle Betheiligten verstehen daß das Wort in der Schrift den jüdischen Sabbath bezeichnet, während außer der Schrift dasselbe Wort gewöhnlich auf den christlichen Sabbath angewandt wird. Lasset nun dem Worte „Bischof" dieselbe Gerechtigkeit widerfahren.

In der Schrift bezeichnet es eigentlich einen sogenannten Priester. Außer der Schrift nach dem fast allgemeinen Gebrauche aller Zeiten, seit der heilige Canon geschlossen war, bezeichnet es diejenige priesterliche Ordnung, die über den Presbytern steht, und welche in der Schrift unter dem Titel „Apostel" zu finden ist.

Wenn ein christlicher Lehrer, der die Feier des Tages, den er „Sabbath" nennt, einschärft, nach seinem neutestamentlichen Zeugnisse gefragt wird, so muß er alle die Stellen herausnehmen, die das Wort enthalten, und ihnen eine andere Deutung geben, und dann zu andern Stellen übergehen, die es nicht enthalten, damit beweist er, daß er das Ding, nicht den Namen, sucht. Und wenn wir Episkopalen nach einem göttlichen Zeugniß für „die Bischöfe" gefragt werden, so thun wir ganz dasselbe, indem wir den Stellen, welche das Wort enthalten, eine andere Deutung geben, und uns auf andre Stellen berufen, welche das wirkliche Dasein des Bischofsamtes lehren, ohne ihm denselben Namen zu geben. Also ver-

wahrt durch ein Beispiel, welches bei unsern Gegnern im Allgemeinen in hohem Ansehen steht, dürfen wir nicht hoffen, daß sie von diesem Theil unsrer Beweisführung ihr Urtheil zurückhalten werden?

Eine andere Unregelmäßigkeit derselben Art kömmt auch bei dem Worte „Aeltester" zum Vorschein. Es wird zuweilen gebraucht zur Bezeichnung eines Predigers oder Geistlichen von irgend einem Grade, vom höchsten, mittelsten und geringsten,* aber eigentlich bezeichnet es einen Priester (Akt. 15:6, 33; Tit. 1:5; Akt. 20:17; 1. Petr. 5, V. 1.) Manche Worte haben eine unbestimmte und eine besondere Meinung. Das Wort „Engel" wird oft unbestimmt angewendet, (Akt. 12:15; Offenb. 1:20; 9:14,) aber im Besondern sind gewisse erschaffene Geister damit gemeint. Das Wort „Gott" wird gebraucht für „Engel" (5. Mos. 10:17; Ps. 97:7; Ps. 136:2) und „Götzen" (2. Mos. 20:3; 25:24 u. s. w.,) und menschliche Standes- oder Magistratspersonen, (2. Mos. 7:1; 22:28; Ps. 83:16; Ps. 138:1; 10:25) doch im Besondern ist das höchste Wesen damit gemeint.

Das Wort „Diakonus" bezeichnet einen gewöhnlichen Diener, einen Diener Gottes in weltlichen Dingen, und einen Diener Christi, aber im Besondern wird es für einen christlichen Prediger des geringsten Grades gebraucht. So auch mit dem Wort „Aeltester," zuweilen wird es gebraucht für die Geistlichkeit irgend eines oder mehrerer Grade, aber seine eigenthümliche Bestimmung ist es Geistliche der zweiten oder mittleren Ordnung zu bezeichnen.

Die obigen Bemerkungen werden hoffentlich diejenigen, welchen es Vergnügen macht die Schrift über den vorliegenden Gegenstand zu befragen, in Stand setzen dieses, unbehindert von der scheinbaren Verwirrung der amtlichen Namen oder Titel, zu thun.

Zu dieser Berufung auf die Schrift, wegen der Streit-

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* Apostel werden Aelteste genannt in 1. Petr. 5:1; 2. Joh. 1; 3. Joh. 1. Diakonen sind sicherlich in diese Bezeichnung eingeschlossen in 1. Tim. 5:19, und wahrscheinlich in Akt. 14:23; 21:18, und Jak. 5:14 und möglicherweise in Akt. 11:30.

frage zwischen Bischofthum und Gleichheit der Aemter, gehen wir nun über.

Daß die Apostel ordinirt haben, darin stimmen alle überein; daß aber Aelteste (Priester) es thaten, läugnen wir. Wir eröffnen diesen Theil unsrer Beweisführung mit der Bemerkung, daß — Apostel und Aelteste (zur Unterscheidung so genannt) nicht gleiche Gewalt und Rechte hatten. Und diesen Satz beweisen wir aus der Schrift in folgender Art.

Diese zwei Klassen von Geistlichen werden von einander unterschieden in den Stellen, welche von ihnen sprechen als von „Aposteln und Aeltesten" (Akt. 15:2; 4:6, 22; Akt. 16:4), oder die da aufzählen „Apostel und Aelteste und Brüder" oder die Laien (Akt. 15:23.) Wenn man zugiebt daß „Priester und Leviten," daß „Bischöfe und Diakonen" verschiedene Ordnungen sind, wenn man ferner zugiebt, daß „Apostel und Brüder (Akt. 11:1) verschiedene Ordnungen sind, dann mögen nach demselben Grundsatz (wenn nämlich die Zusammenstellung nicht von der Art ist, daß das vorangehende Wort durch das nachfolgende erklärt wird) „Apostel und Aelteste" billigerweise ebenfalls als verschiedene Ordnungen betrachtet werden. Und so wie die Ausdrücke „Apostel und Aelteste und Brüder" unzweifelhaft eine Verschiedenheit zwischen der letztern dieser drei Klassen und den andern enthalten, so muß sie zwischen den beiden voranstehenden ebenso offenbar angenommen werden. Apostel waren deßhalb eine Klasse, und Aelteste eine andere Klasse, so wie die Laien eine dritte Klasse bildeten.

Nun wurden die Apostel nicht also genannt, weil sie von Christo selbst eingesetzt worden waren, denn es werden einige in der Schrift „Apostel" genannt, welche nicht also eingesetzt waren, wie Matthäus, Barnabas und wahrscheinlich auch Jakobus, der Bruder des Herrn (Akt. 1:26; 14:4, 14; Gal. 1:19. Vergleiche letztere Stelle mit Mark. 2:3, und Joh. 7:5,) die alle durch bloß menschliche Ordinatoren ordinirt waren; so werden auch Silvanus und Timotheus „Apostel"* genannt; und au-

* Siehe 1 Thess. 2:6 und vergleiche es mit 1:1. Paulus, Silvanus

ßerdem noch Andronicus und Junias, und noch Andere, die wir dieser Liste hinzufügen könnten.* Auch wurden die Apostel nicht also genannt, weil sie den Herrn nach seiner Auferstehung gesehen hatten, denn fünfhundert „Brüder" sahen ihn, (1. Cor. 15 : 6.) Und obgleich die Apostel zu besondern Zeugen der Auferstehung erwählt waren, so erhielten doch noch Andere dieselbe Benennung, obwohl sie nicht dazu erwählt waren, als Timotheus, Silvanus, Andronicus, Junias und Andere. Auch wurden die Apostel nicht deßhalb so genannt, weil sie Macht hatten Wunder zu verrichten; denn von Stephanus und Philippus, die beide nur Diakonen waren, ist es bekannt daß sie auch diese Macht gehabt haben (Akt. 6 : 8; 8 : 6.)

Daraus folgt, oder kann wenigstens deßhalb nicht bezweifelt werden, daß die Apostel deßhalb von den Aeltesten unterschieden wurden, weil sie ihnen in geistlicher Gewalt und geistlichen Rechten übergeordnet waren.†

Wenn wir nun die Natur unzertrennlicher Rechte betrachten — daß sie nicht können (ausgenommen im Wege strafender Zucht) genommen, oder für einige Zeit aufgehoben werden, sondern immer gültig sind — so können wir nicht einräumen, daß diese Obergewalt der Apostel nur

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(oder Silas) und Timotheus sind alle in die Benennung „Apostel" mit eingeschlossen. In V. 18 spricht Paulus von sich allein, vorher jedoch wahrscheinlich nicht. Paulus gebraucht zwar in der That nicht selten die Mehrheit, wenn er auch nur von sich allein spricht; aber auf die Worte „Apostel" und „unsre eignen Seelen" (V. 8.) ist der einfache Gebrauch der Mehrheit nicht anwendbar, sie zeigen vielmehr, daß diese drei, deren Namen an der Spitze der Epistel stehen, hier alle zusammen gemeint sind. Und so werden also Silas und Timotheus mit Paulus in dieser Stelle der Schrift als „Apostel" betrachtet.

* Es wird genügen hier zu bemerken, daß in 2. Cor. 11 : 13 und in Offenb. 2 : 2 von falschen Aposteln gesprochen wird. Solche könnte es nicht gegeben haben, oder sie könnten nicht beansprucht haben einige von den Elfen, oder von den fünf zunächst oben erwähnten, oder Paulus zu sein. Deßhalb zeigt der Titel „Apostel," den sie annahmen, daß es genug Andre gab, die diesen Titel hatten und ihr darauf beanspruchtes Recht beweisen konnten. Und diese Anderen konnten nicht von Christo ordinirt sein, sondern durch Menschen, welche er bevollmächtigt hatte. Calvin giebt zu, daß Andronicus und Junia (Röm. 16 : 7) Apostel gewesen sind. Instit. b. IV. c. III. sect. 5.

† Siehe Anmerkung † auf S. 19.

vorübergehend war, daß sie von den Aeltesten für eine gewisse Zeit volle Gewalt erhielten und sie ihnen nachher wieder zurückgaben. Denn was in der Ordination gegeben wird, wird ohne allen Vorbehalt gegeben, und da es von dem Geber oder den Gebern niemals zurückgenommen, oder zeitweilig aufgehoben, oder verändert worden ist, und besonders da sich von Seiten der ersten „Aeltesten" keine Urkunde noch irgend ein Zeugniß von einem öffentlichen Beschluß, oder von einem privatim getroffenen Uebereinkommen vorfindet, das sich auf eine solche Zurücknahme, oder zeitweilige Aufhebung, oder Veränderung bezieht, so können wir diese Anschauung nur als eine bloß menschliche Idee betrachten, und gegen die rechtsgültige Annahme einer bloßen Idee sträubt sich jedes gesunde Urtheil.

Wir wiederholen deßhalb, daß „Apostel und Aelteste" verschiedene Ordnungen waren, so wahr, als die „Brüder" oder Laien eine dritte Klasse, verschieden von den beiden andern, waren.

Wenn diese Anschauungen der Schrift und der Natur der Rechte, die vom Amt unzertrennlich sind, zugegeben werden (und wir denken, daß sie zugegeben werden müssen) dann haben wir nun zu Gunsten des Bischofthums bewiesen daß es ursprünglich ein heiliges Amt gab, das dem Amte der „Aeltesten" oder Presbyterianer übergeordnet war. Und dieses beweist beinahe den ganzen Anspruch des Episkopates.

Aber die Vertheidiger der Gleichheit verwerfen unsere Anschauungen der Schrift und der amtlichen Rechte, und gründen ihr Lehrgebäude auf die Anschauung, welche wir als eine bloße Idee verworfen haben. Da sie nun die Obergewalt der Apostel zugeben, so behaupten sie, daß die Unterordnung der Aeltesten unter dieselbe nur eine vorübergehende Ordnung gewesen sei, hervorgerufen durch das Bedürfniß der damals neuen Kirche, und daß als die Gemeinden fest begründet waren, die ganze geistliche Gewalt auf den Aeltesten ruhte und kein Theil derselben ihnen länger vorenthalten ward.

Der Beweis, auf Grund dessen sie das behaupten ist,

daß von den Aeltesten im Neuen Testament ausgesagt würde, daß sie ordinirt, die höchste Kirchenzucht und das höchste Regiment verwaltet hätten. In Antwort darauf behaupten wir nun: 1. daß es keine Bibelstelle giebt, die darlegt daß „Aelteste" das Recht (oder das vollständige Recht) zu ordiniren jemals erhielten oder ausübten; sondern daß 2. eine Ordnung von Geistlichen, die den Aeltesten vorgesetzt war, ununterbrochen bestand, so wie sie in den Aposteln ihren Anfang genommen hatte. Diese beiden Behauptungen können wir beweisen, und aus der letzten Abtheilung wird auch hervorgehen, daß die Aeltesten keine Kirchenzucht über die Geistlichkeit ausübten.

1.

Es giebt kein biblisches Zeugniß dafür, daß bloße Aelteste (Priester) ordinirt haben.

Indem wir einige wenige nichtssagende Berufungen auf die Schrift von Seiten unsrer Gegner übergehen, von welchen wir denken, daß man zugestehen wird, daß sie nur den Erfolg haben ihre eigne Sache zu schwächen,* finden wir daß es nur zwei Stellen giebt, welche vielleicht scheinbar zu Gunsten einer Ordination, durch bloße Priester vollzogen, in Anspruch genommen werden könnten. Doch durch keine von beiden Stellen kann ein solcher Gebrauch bewiesen werden.

Die erste Stelle ist Akt. c. 13:1, 2, 3. Fünf Personen in Antiochien, Propheten und Lehrer genannt, unter denen zuerst Barnabas und zuletzt Paulus angeführt wird, bekommen vom heiligen Geist den Befehl: „Sondert mir aus Barnabam und Saulum zu dem Werk, dazu ich sie berufen habe;" welchen die drei übrigen durch Fasten und Beten und durch Auflegung der Hände pünktlich ausführten und sie sodann gehen ließen. Diese Handlung wird bisweilen für die Ordination des Barnabas und Saul zu

* Wie z. B. die Thatsachen, daß in Akt 1:26 und 14:23 mehr als ein Ordinator war. Die Antwort ist, daß die Ordinatoren Apostel und nicht bloße Presbyter waren.

der einen heiligen Ordnung der Presbyterianer ausgegeben, und da sie durch solche Leute vollzogen ward, die nur „Propheten und Lehrer" waren, so wird sie als ein in der Schrift enthaltenes Beispiel der presbyterianischen Ordination in Anspruch genommen. Diese Behauptung kann aber auf unwidersprechliche Weise widerlegt werden.

1. Barnabas und Saulus werden hier selbst „Propheten und Lehrer" genannt und von ihnen sowohl, als von den drei andern wird gesagt, „daß sie dem Herrn gedienet hätten;" wenn nun in Folge dessen diese drei vor dieser Auflegung der Hände im Amte waren, so waren es die zwei andern ebenfalls. Wenn diese Handlung also überhaupt eine Ordination war, so muß es eine zweite und folglich eine zu einer höhern Ordnung gewesen sein, welche mit der Gleichheit der Aemter nicht bestehen kann. War sie aber keine Ordination (wie sie denn wirklich keine war) so war sie eine bloße Aussonderung dieser zwei Apostel zu einem besondern Arbeitsfelde, welche auf die vor uns liegende durchaus keinen Bezug hat.

2. Paulus war lange vor diesem Ereigniß schon ein Prediger, (Akt. 9 : 20 – 22 ; 27 – 29,) und ebenso Barnabas, (Akt. 11 : 23 – 26,) welche Thatsachen, vereinigt mit der schon früher erwähnten: „daß sie dem Herrn gedient hätten," einen gewissen Beweis liefern, daß sie schon vor dieser Auflegung der Hände das heilige Amt inne hatten; welche daher, wir wiederholen es, entweder eine zweite und höhere Ordination, welche der Gleichheit zuwider ist, oder überhaupt gar keine Ordination, sondern nur eine Bestellung zu einem eigenthümlichen Arbeitsfelde, zu einem besondern „Werk" gewesen sein muß.

3. Daß diese Handlung zu Antiochien sich nur auf ein besonderes „Werk" bezieht, können alle diejenigen klar genug erkennen, welche den Gang des Paulus und Barnabas durch dieses ganze Werk verfolgen, welches Akt. 13 : 4 bis 14 : 26 beschrieben ist, und dessen Vollendung in V. 26 berichtet wird („und von dannen schifften sie gen Antiochien, von dannen sie verordnet waren, durch die Gnade Gottes zu dem Werk, das sie hatten ausgerichtet.") Als dieses „Werk," ihre Missionsreise, ausge-

richtet war, da war alles erfüllt, was der heilige Geist von ihnen verlangte, als er sie „ausgesondert" oder „verordnet hatte durch die Gnade Gottes zu dem Werk, dazu er sie berufen hatte." Dieser Beruf, diese Aussonderung, dieses Werk bezieht sich daher nur auf eine besondere Mission. Diese Handauflegung aber war keine Ordination, sondern eine geringere Ceremonie, welche mit der Streitfrage zwischen Episkopalen und Presbyterianern in gar keiner Verbindung steht.

4. Der deutlichste Beweis, daß es keine Ordination war, findet sich Gal. 1 : 1, wo Paulus selbst erklärt zu sein „ein Apostel nicht von Menschen, auch nicht durch Menschen, sondern durch Jesum Christum und Gott den Vater." Nicht von Menschen, auch nicht durch Menschen: ist das nicht eine Ausdrucksweise, die alle menschliche Mitwirkung bei der Ordination Pauli unbedingt ausschließt? Welcher andere Ausdruck könnte hinzugefügt werden, um sie zu verstärken? Keiner, als der, welcher unmittelbar darauf folgt: „durch Jesum Christum und Gott den Vater." Da Paulus durch den Heiland persönlich, als er ihm auf dem Wege nach Damaskus erschien (Akt. 25 : 16 – 18) zu einem Apostel ernannt worden war, so kann es nicht möglich sein, daß jene Handlung zu Antiochien seine Ordination gewesen war.* Und wenn diese Ceremonie in Bezug auf ihn

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* Die folgenden noch hinzugefügten Beweise sind der Beachtung werth, 1. Röm. 1 : 5; 1. Cor. 1 : 17 und 1. Tim. 1 : 1 behauptet Paulus, daß er seinen apostolischen Auftrag von Christo empfangen habe. 2. In den ersten Versen von 1. Cor., 2. Cor., Ephes., Col., und 2. Tim., erklärt er sich selbst für einen Apostel „durch" oder „nach dem Willen Gottes." 3. Gal. 1 : 17, wo er von der Zeit „unmittelbar" nach seiner Bekehrung spricht, sagt er, daß er nicht zu denen gegangen sei, die „vor ihm Apostel waren;" folglich betrachtete er sich von der Zeit und von dem Augenblick an, da Christus ihm erschienen war, als einen Apostel. 4. 1. Tim. 2 : 7, behauptet er sein Apostolat mit einer hohen Betheurung. —„Dazu ich gesetzt bin ein Prediger und Apostel (ich sage die Wahrheit in Christo und lüge nicht) u. s. w." Wäre seine Ordination von Menschen vollzogen worden, sie würde, wie in gewöhnlichen Fällen, wohl bekannt gewesen sein; wäre sie, wie behauptet wird, zu Antiochien verrichtet worden, so würde sie ganz vorzüglich bekannt gewesen sein, und eine solche Art der Behauptung würde für Paulus durchaus nicht am Platze, ja sogar unziemlich gewesen sein. Da ihm aber Christus in Person seine Vollmacht ver-

keine Ordination war, so war sie es auch in Bezug auf Barnabas nicht. Wann der Letztere ein Apostel wurde, wissen wir nicht; doch wissen wir ebensowenig wann Jakobus, der Bruder des Herrn, Silvanus, Timotheus, und Andere zu diesem Amte gelangten.

Diese erste Berufung auf die Schrift wegen einer presbyterianischen Ordination kann daher nicht bewiesen werden, weil dort weder eine Verrichtung einer Ordination stattfand, noch aus der Stelle gefolgert werden kann, auf die man sich beruft. Sollten einige anders darüber denken, so müßten sie nicht allein die obigen Beweise widerlegen, sondern auch aus der Schrift darlegen, daß die vermeintlichen Ordinatoren bloße Priester waren, denn die Benennungen „Propheten und Lehrer" sind durchaus nicht geeignet diese Sache festzustellen.

Wenn Barnabas und Paulus, welchen diese Titel gegeben werden, als zur Ordination bestimmte Laien zu betrachten sind, warum sollen wir dann nicht auch die andern drei als Laien betrachten, welche eine Laien-Ordination vornehmen? Man kann sowohl das eine, als das andere als richtig annehmen, denn wir lesen, daß Laien und sogar Laienweiber „weissagten" in dem Zeitalter der Inspiration (1. Cor. 11:5; Akt. 19:6; und 21:9.) Oder wenn die drei vermeintlichen Ordinatoren, „Propheten und Lehrer" genannt, Geistliche waren, so können sie den Aeltesten übergeordnete Apostel gewesen sein, da Silas sowohl ein „Prophet" als auch ein „Apostel" genannt wird (Akt. 15:32; 1. Thess. 2:6 vergleiche mit 1:1) und die Propheten „Brüder" des Apostels Johannes genannt werden. (Offenb. 22:9.) Auch nennt sich der Apostel Paulus selbst einen „Lehrer." (1. Tim. 2:7; 2. Tim. 1:11.) Ueberdies ist es schon gezeigt worden, daß

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liehen hatte, und die Menschen, die zu der Zeit anwesend waren, die damals gesprochenen Worte nicht verstehen konnten, (Akt. 22:9,) so war es ebenso natürlich als recht von ihm zu erklären, daß er auf diese Weise beauftragt worden sei, und offenbare Betheuerungen und Siegel seiner Wahrhaftigkeit zu gebrauchen. Dieses war für gewöhnliche Zwecke genug. Der endgültige Beweis für seine Erklärung und seine Betheuerungen war die Verrichtung von Wundern.

Paulus hier mit „Propheten und Lehrern" in einen Rang gesetzt wird und daß er auch zu dieser Zeit schon ein Apostel war.

Gewährt nun diese Thatsache nicht einen leidlichen Beweisgrund, daß die andern vier, deren Namen in der Liste, die in der Stelle enthalten ist, über dem seinigen stehen, auch von apostolischem Range waren? In Anbetracht dieser mannigfachen Schwierigkeiten können wir gewiß annehmen, daß es unmöglich ist irgend ein Zeugniß dafür beizubringen, daß diese Handlung zu Antiochien eine durch Priester vollzogene Ordination war. Wir haben in der That bewiesen, daß es in keiner Weise eine Ordination war und deßhalb weisen wir die Berufung der Nicht-Episkopalen auf diese Stelle des Neuen Testamentes zurück.

Nur noch eine andre Stelle wird zu Gunsten einer presbyterianischen Ordination in Anspruch genommen — „laß nicht außer Acht die Gabe, die dir gegeben ist durch die Weissagung mit Handauflegung der Aeltesten." (1. Tim. 4:14.) Diese wird von unsern nicht-episkopalischen Brüdern als die Urkunde einer presbyterianischen Ordination betrachtet. Laßt uns untersuchen, ob die Handlung eine Ordination war? und ob sie, wenn sie es war, eine presbyterianische Ordination war?

Ward die hier erwähnte Auflegung der Hände auf Timotheus eine Ordination? Sie kann es nicht sein, wenigstens kann es nicht bewiesen werden. Und wenn wir Schrift mit Schrift vergleichen, sind wir dann nicht berechtigt sie zu betrachten als eine Handlung, ähnlich derjenigen, welcher wir oben begegnet sind in dem Falle des Barnabas und Saulus? In beiden Fällen fand die Ceremonie der Handauflegung statt, und der Befehl des heiligen Geistes an die „Propheten" in dem einen Falle entspricht der „Weissagung" oder der Bezeichnung der Person durch den Geist Gottes in dem andern Falle; einer Bezeichnung die schon vorher von St. Paulus erwähnt wurde: „dieses Gebot befehle ich dir, mein Sohn Timotheus, nach den vorigen Weissagungen über dir." (1. Tim. 1:18.)

Wir unterwerfen diese Anschauung der Handlung, vollzogen durch diejenigen, welche die Aeltesten genannt werden, dem unbefangenen Urtheil unsrer Leser. Wenn sie zugeben, daß sie sich wahrscheinlich auf eine vom heiligen Geist angeordnete Aussonderung eines Mannes, der bereits im Predigtamte stand, zu einem besondern Arbeitsfelde—„zu dem Gebot, das ihm befohlen," in ordentlicher Weise durch St. Paulum, bezog, welches entsprach „dem Werke" zu welchem Saulus und Barnabas ausgesondert wurden—ein Brauch, welcher natürlich zugleich mit der Gabe der Inspiration sein Ende erreicht hat—so werden wir sehen, daß es keine Ordination war, die durch die Aeltesten vollzogen wurde, sondern nur eine „Empfehlung des Timotheus an die Gnade Gottes wegen des Werkes, das er auszurichten hatte."

Die Ordination des Timotheus mag St. Paulus in der zweiten Epistel erwähnt haben: „die Gabe Gottes, die in dir ist, durch die Auflegung meiner Hände." (2. Tim. 1:6.) Ist das der Fall, so war es eine Ordination durch einen Apostel, wie dieselbe einhellig im ganzen Neuen Testamente bezeugt wird. Wo nicht, so ist die Ordination des Timotheus nirgends besonders erwähnt, muß aber, wie in andern Fällen, hinzugedacht werden, und von diesem Gesichtspunkte aus stehen diese beiden Stellen in gar keiner Verbindung mit der vorliegenden Streitfrage.

Aber unsre nicht-episkopalischen Brüder betrachten allgemein die in Frage stehende Stelle so, als ob sie sich auf die Ordination des Timotheus bezöge. Darum laßt uns ihnen auch auf diesem Felde entgegentreten.

War es eine presbyterianische Ordination? Wir erwidern zuerst, daß ein gewichtiges Zeugniß das Wort "presbyterium" dahin erklärt hat, daß es das Amt bedeute, zu dem Timotheus ordinirt wurde, und nicht die Personen, welche ihn ordinirten; also daß die Stelle lauten würde—„mit Handauflegung zu übertragen das Priesterthum," oder die Priesterschaft, oder das geistliche Amt; und nach dieser Anschauung war St. Paulus selbst der Ordinator des Timotheus, wie in dem oben angeführten Satze aus der zweiten Epistel erwähnt wurde.

Ueber diesen Punkt fügen wir eine Stelle aus Grotius hinzu.

Dieser fährt, nachdem er davon gesprochen, daß die Presbyter bei der Handauflegung ihre Hände neben die der Bischöfe legten, also fort: „Ich darf zu größerer Bekräftigung dieser Sache nicht den Ausdruck Pauli, von der Handauflegung der Aeltesten anführen, weil ich weiß, Hieronymus, Ambrosius und Andere von den Alten, sowie auch Calvin, sicherlich das Haupt aller Neuern, verstehen unter dem Worte "*presbyterium*" in dieser Stelle nicht eine Versammlung, sondern das Amt, zu welchem Timotheus befördert wurde; und in der That kann es dem, der mit den Concilien und den Schriften der Väter vertraut ist, nicht unbekannt sein, daß die Worte "*presbyterium*, sowie "*episcopatus*" und "*diaconatus*" die Namen von Aemtern sind. Dazu füge man noch, daß Paulus seine Hände auf Timotheum legte."

Durch diese Auslegung des Wortes "presbyterium" — daß es nicht die Ordinatoren, sondern das übertragene Amt bezeichnet — räumen wir allen Anschein des Widerspruchs zwischen dieser Stelle und derjenigen, in welcher Paulus von der Auflegung seiner Hände spricht, hinweg. Und um von der oben angeführten Meinung einiger Väter, und Calvin's und Grotius den geringsten Gebrauch zu machen, macht nicht ihr Zeugniß die Anwendung der vorliegenden Stelle auf eine Körperschaft presbyterianische Ordinatoren zweifelhaft?

Möge immerhin gesagt werden, daß das Wort „Priesterthum oder Priesterherrschaft beweist," daß Timotheus damals zu einem bloßen Priester ordinirt worden sei, wir würden diesen Beweisgrund unschädlich machen durch Berufung auf 1. Thess. 2 : 6, (vergleiche mit 1 : 1) wo er ein „Apostel" genannt wird. Wir würden auch auf die Thatsache hinweisen, daß, wie verschieden die drei obigen lateinischen Namen für die drei Grade des priesterlichen Amtes auch gewesen sein mögen, diese Namen der Aemter doch im Griechischen, und in einem frühern Zeitraum nur unbestimmt angewendet wurden.

Wenigstens war es im Neuen Testamente so. Denn also lesen wir „diesen Dienst (Diakonat) und Apostelamt.“ (Akt. 1:35,) in Bezug auf das Amt, wozu Matthäus gelangte: „Ich bin der Apostel der Heiden, ich preise mein Amt,“ (mein Diakonat) „das Amt (Diakonat) das ich empfangen habe.“ „Lasset uns beweisen als die Diener (Diakonen) Gottes,“ (Röm. 11:13; Akt. 20:24; 2. Cor. 6:4) sind Stellen, die St. Paulus auf sich selbst anwendet.

Wir lesen auch: „Wer ist nun Paulus, wer ist Apollo? Diener (Diakonen) sind sie, durch welche ihr seid gläubig geworden;“ (1. Cor. 3:5,) und „thue das Werk eines evangelischen Predigers, richte dein Amt (Diakonat) redlich aus.“ „Du wirst ein guter Diener (Diakonus) Jesu Christi sein.“ (das sind Ermahnungen an Timotheus gerichtet) (2. Tim. 4:5; 1. Tim. 4:6.)

Diese Stellen, um nicht noch andre ähnliche hier anzuführen, obwohl von ihnen gesagt werden mag, daß sie weit davon entfernt sind zu beweisen, daß es, wenn es nur ein heiliges Amt gäbe, die Ordnung der Diakonen sein müßte, antworten dennoch allem, was zum Nachtheil der Bischofswürde wegen der Anwendung des Wortes "presbyterium" auf das heilige Amt, wozu Timotheus ordinirt wurde, gesagt werden mag, unwidersprechlich: daß, wenn das Wort Priesterthum oder Priesteramt besage, daß er nur ein Priester war, auch das Wort Diakonat besagen müsse, daß er und Matthias, und Paulus, und Apollo nur Diakonen waren.

In kurzen Worten, wie alle erfahrnen Ausleger wissen, und wie die Episkopalen in dieser Streitfrage stets behaupten, wir suchen in der Schrift nicht amtliche Namen irgend einer Art, sondern nur amtliche Gewalt; und wir finden daselbst, daß Timotheus einen höhern Grad der Gewalt besaß, als das Wort presbyterium, insofern es von episcopatus und diaconatus verschieden ist, ihm einräumen würde. Das Wort "presbyterium," obwohl es sich, nach der jetzt vor uns liegenden Auslegungsart, auf das Amt bezieht, bezeichnet also doch nicht eine Unter-

abtheilung des Amtes, sondern bezieht sich im Allgemeinen auf das geistliche Amt, das dem Timotheus übertragen wurde.

Doch wenn wir unsern Gegnern auch zugestehen, daß die „Priesterschaft" hier nicht das dem Timotheus anvertraute Amt, sondern, wie sie behaupten, eine Körperschaft von Aeltesten bezeichne, und daß die angeführte Handlung seine Ordination sei — so treten wir ihnen doch wiederum mit der Frage entgegen, war es eine presbyterianische Ordination? Und hier fragen wir — woraus war diese ordinirende „Priesterschaft" zusammengesetzt, denn die ganze Frage concentrirt sich in der Bedeutung dieses Wortes.

Eine Priesterschaft bezeichnet einen Körper von Aeltesten, und für sich allein genommen, kann es von irgend einer Art von Aeltesten ausgelegt werden. Jene z. B. die da meinen in der Schrift solche zu finden, die man Verwaltungs-Aelteste nennt, mögen glauben daß diese Priesterschaft aus solchen bestanden habe; und wenn ihnen nicht durch andere Stellen widersprochen würde, so könnten sie hierauf den Schatten eines Beweises für Laien-Ordination gründen.

Andere mögen behaupten, daß der Grad, den man den der Priester nennt, diese Priesterschaft ausgemacht habe. Oder, da St. Paulus und St. Johannes sich selbst „Aelteste" nennen, (1. Pet. 5 : 1, 2; 2. Joh. 1 : 3; Joh. 1,) so mag diese Priesterschaft aus Aposteln bestanden haben. Oder zuletzt, mag es aus zwei beliebigen Arten der erwähnten Aeltesten zusammengesetzt gewesen sein, oder es mögen alle drei Arten vereinigt gewesen sein bei der Handauflegung auf Timotheus. Da mögen Verwaltungs-Aelteste und Priester, oder Priester und ein oder mehrere Apostel, oder Verwaltungs-Aelteste und ein oder mehrere Apostel, oder Verwaltungs-Aelteste, Priester und Apostel zugegen gewesen sein.

Darnach gäbe es, wenn wir nach keinem anderweitigen Zeugniß uns umsehen, nicht weniger als sieben Bestandtheile, aus welchen diese „Priesterschaft" mag zusammengesetzt gewesen sein. Oder, wenn wir die Verwaltungs-

Aeltesten ausschließen, so giebt es immer noch drei Bestandtheile, woraus sie formirt gewesen sein mag; nämlich aus Priestern allein, aus Aposteln allein, und aus einem oder mehreren Aposteln und Presbytern zusammen. Darum erklärt sich der bloße Ausdruck „Priesterschaft" nicht selbst und kann nicht für sich allein zu Gunsten der Gleichheit der Aemter angeführt werden.

Wenn man auch immer darauf bestehen mag, daß die besondre Bedeutung des Wortes „Aeltester" den Vorzug haben müsse, und daß folglich bei dieser ordinirenden „Priesterschaft" nur Priester gewesen seien, wir antworten doch darauf — daß die besondere Bedeutung des Titels eines einzelnen Amtsträgers weit davon entfernt ist sich nothwendigerweise auch auf den ihm entsprechenden Titel einer Körperschaft oder eines Amtes zu erstrecken. Wir haben schon einen mit diesem verwandten Einwurf erwähnt, aber es mag nicht ungeeignet sein einige fernere Erklärungen der Unbestimmtheit amtlicher Namen hinzuzufügen.

So sagen wir, die jüdische „Priesterschaft" und schließen in diesen Ausdruck nebst den Priestern auch die höhere Ordnung der Hohenpriester, sowie die mindere der Leviten mit ein. So haben wir auch die Redensarten „Amt (buchstäblich Diakonat) der Versöhnung," und die Ausdrücke „daß unser Amt (Diakonat) nicht verlästert werde," „darum, dieweil wir ein solches Amt (Diakonat) haben," „der mich gesetzet in das Amt (Diakonat)," und mehr speciell wird von allen „Aposteln, Propheten, Evangelisten" und Andern gesagt, daß sie gegeben worden sind „zu dem Werke des Amtes (Diakonats), (2. Cor. 5:18; 6:3; 4:1; 1. Tim. 1:12; Ephes. 4:11, 12,) und in allen diesen Stellen schließt das Wort Diakonat, διακονια ausdrücklich die Benennung einer heiligen Körperschaft von Männern, oder ihres Amtes in sich, ja es bezeichnet sogar hauptsächlich diejenigen, welche über den Diakonen stehen.

Darum kann das Wort „Priesterschaft" keine größere Bestimmtheit haben als die Worte „Amt oder Diakonat," und kann sich nicht zu Gunsten unsrer Gegner selbst

erklären. Es kann dadurch nur eine „Körperschaft von Geistlichen" bezeichnet werden.* Und diese Geistlichen mögen entweder zum Theil oder im Ganzen Apostel gewesen sein, welche über den Priestern standen.

Darum ist es klar, wir wiederholen es, daß diese Stelle, wenn sie sich auf eine Ordination bezieht, nicht erklärt werden kann ohne von andern Stellen in der Schrift Licht zu empfangen. Darum wollen wir uns auf dieses Licht berufen.

Die „Priesterschaft" mag, wie wir gesehen haben, aus Aposteln allein, oder aus einem oder mehreren Aposteln, verbunden mit Andern, bestanden haben. Mit dieser Vermuthung stimmt es überein, daß St. Paulus an Timotheus schreibt, „daß du erweckest die Gabe, die in dir ist, durch die Auflegung meiner Hände." (2. Tim. 1 : 6.) Dieselben Ursachen nun, welche die Stelle von der Handauflegung der „Priesterschaft" als auf die Ordination anwendbar erscheinen lassen — dieselben Ursachen werden auch diese andere Stelle, die Handauflegung Pauli betreffend, als auf die nämliche Ceremonie anwendbar erscheinen lassen, wenn nicht in der That eine zweite und höhere Ceremonie hier vorausgesetzt wird, welche jedenfalls die Aemtergleichheit vernichtet, und welche die Gleichheitsfreunde daher nicht zu ihrem eigenen Vortheil anführen können.

Darum hatte Paulus an der Ordination des Timotheus mindestens einen Antheil; dieser Apostel legte seine Hände auf, wer auch sonst noch zu der ordinirenden „Priesterschaft" gehört haben mag. Daher kann sie nicht für eine presbyterianische Ordination ausgegeben werden, sondern es war eine apostolische Ordination. Und also sind

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* Das Wort „Priesterthum oder Priesterschaft" hat also keine bestimmtere Bedeutung als den Ausdruck „Geistliches Amt." Das Wort Bisthum (Akt. 1 : 20) ist, nach denselben Grundsätzen, keine genauere Bezeichnung. Der Schreiber dieses hat nicht ein einziges Beispiel in der Schrift bemerkt, in welchem die besondere Bedeutung eines Amtmanns nothwendigerweise den Vorzug hat; nur das Wort „Apostel" ist vielleicht eine Ausnahme, denn es wird nur von solchen gebraucht, von denen bekannt ist, daß sie Apostel gewesen sind.

die Einwürfe unsrer Gegner zur Unterstützung der Ordinationsrechte bloßer „Aeltesten," von dieser Stelle genommen, überwunden. Wir haben bewiesen, daß Priester allein die Ordination nicht verrichteten, da wir zugestanden, daß diese Handlung eine solche war, sondern daß wirklich ein Apostel zu dem die „Priesterschaft"* benannten Körper gehörte, oder sonst ihm zu diesem Zweck beigefügt wurde.

Es ist bemerkenswerth, daß St. Paulus folgenden Unterschied macht in Anbetracht seiner eignen Mitwirkung und derjenigen der Anderen bei dieser muthmaßlichen Ordination—„durch die Auflegung meiner Hände"—„mit Handauflegung der Priesterschaft." Eine solche Unterscheidung können wir als eine Andeutung betrachten, daß die Kraft der Ordinationshandlung von Paulus ausging; während die Priesterschaft, oder der Rest dieses Körpers, obschon er mit in dieselbe eingeschlossen war, doch nur seine Zustimmung ausdrückte.

Im Ganzen: Kann es geläugnet werden, daß eine gewissenhafte und vorurtheilsfreie Auslegung der zwei Stellen, die sich auf die Ordination des Timotheus beziehen sollen, verlangen muß, daß, um irgend einen Körper, der eine Priesterschaft genannt wird, Gewalt zum Ordiniren zu verleihen, ein Geistlicher gegenwärtig sein müsse, der den (gewöhnlichen und nicht inspirirten Theil) des Ranges und der Rechte eines Apostels besitzt?

Gäbe es auch kein ausdrückliches Zeugniß zu unsern Gunsten in den andern Theilen der Schrift, die episkopalische Anschauungsweise würde doch wenigstens ein ebenso guter Schlüssel zu der Bedeutung des Wortes "presbyterium" sein, als die presbyterianische. Und wenn wir die obige Unterscheidung von „durch" und „mit" betrachten, so ist unsere Anschauungsweise offenbar die bessere von beiden. Doch hier ist der nicht-episkopalische Schrift-

* Ignatius, der um das Jahr 110 den Märtyrertod erlitt und wohlbekannt ist durch seinen Eifer für die Bischofswürde, nennt die Apostel die „Priesterschaft der Kirche." Epistel an die Philadelphier, Seite 5.

beweis erschöpft. Von ihrem schärfsten Beweise ist gezeigt worden, daß er mit der Gleichheit nur sehr dürftig bestehen kann, während er mit der bischöflichen Verfassung viel besser übereinstimmt. Deßhalb weisen wir die Berufung unsrer Gegner auf diese, die einzige Stelle der Schrift, auf welche sie, außer der bereits vorher zurückgewiesenen, einige Ansprüche gründen könnten, zurück.

Unsere Leser wollen sich nun erinnern, daß wir vorher bewiesen haben, daß „Apostel und Aelteste" verschiedene Klassen von Geistlichen gewesen sind, ebenso verschieden von einander, als die „Brüder" oder die Laien von beiden waren. Daß die ersteren ordinirt haben wird allerseits eingeräumt und erhellt klar aus der Schrift. (Ap. 1 : 26; 6 : 6; 14 : 23; 2. Tim. 1 : 6.) Jetzt haben wir aber bewiesen, daß es für die Behauptung, daß bloße Aelteste (Presbyter) ordinirt haben, kein inspirirtes Zeugniß giebt — keines aus irgend einem Zeitraum des apostolischen Zeitalters, und darum giebt es auch keinen Beweis aus der Schrift, daß solche Aelteste das Recht zum Ordiniren haben.

Es lag dem Presbyterianismus ob, Zeugniß beizubringen, daß sie ein derartiges Recht genossen; da er aber solches nicht thun konnte, so kann er auch von uns nicht verlangen, daß wir ohne Zeugniß ein solches Recht zugestehen. Es kann nicht bewiesen und kann ohne Beweis nicht zugestanden werden, daß bloße Priester jemals die in der heiligen Schrift erwähnten Ordinationen verrichteten, oder daß daselbst von ihnen ausgesagt wird, daß sie das Recht hätten solche Handlungen zu verrichten. Dieser Satz kann nicht umgestoßen werden.

2.

Alles was den Episkopalen noch obliegt ist — zu beweisen, daß die obige Unterscheidung zwischen Aeltesten und einem ihnen, besonders in Bezug auf die Macht zu ordiniren, übergeordnetem Grade, von hinlänglicher Dauer war, um sich als eine bleibende und nicht nur für einen

gewissen Zeitraum bestimmte Einrichtung auszuweisen. Zu diesem letztern Theil unsrer Beweisführung, der auch ein unabhängiger und sehr vorzüglicher Beweis für die Bischofswürde ist, gehen wir nun über.

Lasset irgend jemand Akt. 20 : 28 — 35 lesen und wohl betrachten, welches Gebot St. Paulus dort den Aeltesten (Presbytern oder Presbyter-Bischöfen) zu Ephesus giebt. Sodann lasset ihn die beiden Episteln an Timotheus lesen und unparteiisch den Befehl ansehen, welchen derselbe Apostel dem zu Ephesus stehenden Timotheus persönlich giebt. Und nach dieser Vergleichung der Aufträge, laßt ihn entscheiden, ob die Schrift nicht diese einzelne Person (Timotheus) in Bezug auf kirchliche Rechte, und besonders in Anbetracht der Gewalt zu ordiniren, über diese Aeltesten stellt.

Oder, wenn ein solcher Untersucher einigen Zweifel über die Bestimmtheit hegen sollte, mit welcher die Oberhoheit des Timotheus behauptet wird, so lasset ihn gewissenhaft entscheiden, welche Andeutungen die Schrift über diesen Gegenstand ertheilt — welchen Weg die Vergleichung der Beweise uns zeigt. Uns erscheint der Beweis unbedingt; doch für ein recht gestimmtes Gemüth ist es genug, wenn er nur überwiegend ist: Prüfet denn diese zwei Abtheilungen des Neuen Testaments und zunächst die, welche sich auf die Aeltesten bezieht.

Im zwanzigsten Kapitel der Apostelgeschichte, V. 28 u. s. w. wird den Aeltesten zu Ephesus anbefohlen — Acht zu haben auf sich selbst — Acht zu haben auf die ganze Heerde über welche sie der heilige Geist zu Aufsehern (Bischöfe) gesetzt hat — zu weiden die Gemeinde Gottes — und zu gedenken der dreijährigen Vermahnung des Apostels, zu wachen gegen die greulichen Wölfe, die der Heerden nicht schonen würden, und gegen diejenigen unter ihnen selbst, die verkehrte Lehren aussprechen würden.

Dieses sind die vier Punkte (oder drei, wenn man den zweiten mit dem dritten vereinigen will) der Ermahnung, welche ihnen der Apostel hinterließ; zu welcher man noch eine andere hinzufügen mag, die aus dem 35. Vers genommen ist, und welche die Arbeitsamkeit und die Liebe zu

den „Schwachen" betrifft. Was enthält denn nun diese Ermahnung, oder dieser Befehl, das anzeigte, daß diese Aeltesten die Macht hatten geistliche Zucht zu üben? sicherlich nichts. Sie werden verpflichtet Acht auf sich selbst zu haben und gegen falsche Lehrer auf der Hut zu sein; aber kein Recht wird erwähnt irgend einen aus ihrer eignen Zahl oder einen unter sie kommenden falschen Geistlichen des Amtes zu entsetzen. Sie sollen „weiden" oder vielleicht (wie das Wort zuweilen übersetzt worden ist) regieren die Kirche, das heißt, sie sollen ihrer pflegen nach Weise der Hirten.

Die „Kirche" bedeutet hier natürlich die vorher erwähnte „Heerde" oder die Laien,* denn Hirten wachen oder herrschen nicht über Hirten, wenn nicht etwa Oberhirten unter ihnen sind, die solche Gewalt von ihrem gemeinschaftlichen Herrn und Meister empfangen haben. Darum hatten diese Aeltesten, so weit es sich erkennen läßt, nicht das Regiment über die Geistlichkeit in ihrer eignen Körperschaft. Und es ist weder eine Spur noch eine Andeutung vorhanden, daß sie je das Recht zum Ordiniren gehabt haben.

Wir können noch hinzufügen, daß das Ordinations- und Regierungsrecht dieser Aeltesten auch nicht als ein solches betrachtet werden kann, das aus der Auslegung hervorgeht oder eine stillschweigende Folgerung ist; denn jede Stelle in der Schrift, die von der Gewalt über die Geistlichkeit spricht, oder darauf hindeutet, giebt diese Gewalt den Aposteln, oder auch dem Timotheus und Titus, oder den Engeln der sieben Kirchen in Asien; und von diesen kann es nicht bewiesen werden, daß sie bloße Priester gewesen sind, sondern sie waren, wie wir in Bezug auf die Apostel bewiesen haben und jetzt dabei sind auch in Anbetracht der Uebrigen zu beweisen, von ihnen verschiedene und höher stehende Amtsträger. Gefolgerte oder mit einbegriffene Rechte können nur in Ermangelung bestimmter

* Sowie in Akt. 4 : 22. Es ist sehr leicht möglich, daß Diakonen mit in diese Stellen eingeschlossen sind.

Zeugnisse geltend gemacht werden, und da solches bestimmtes Zeugniß durch andere Stellen gegeben wird, so kann hier durchaus keine stillschweigende Folgerung genügend sein. Das bestimmte Zeugniß ist gegen die Gleichheit, daher darf man zu ihrer Unterstützung nicht zur Auslegung seine Zuflucht nehmen. — Auch führt der Geist der Anrede Pauli an diese Aeltesten uns nicht zu einem solchen Zufluchtsorte, da das Lehrgebäude, welches keiner Auslegung bedarf, sowohl mit ihren verschiedenen Ausdrücken als auch mit dem, was sie verlangt, völlig übereinstimmt.

Nach der episkopalischen Anschauungsweise giebt es in der That keine entscheidende Gewalt über die Geistlichkeit ohne einen Bischof, doch ist es dieser Anschauungsweise nicht zuwider, daß Priester, in einem solchen Falle, große geistliche Gewalt über die Laien ausüben: sie können nämlich von der Communion zurückweisen, was ein sehr hoher Akt der Kirchenregierung ist; und da, wo kein Bischof ist, kann keine Appellation gegen solches Urtheil stattfinden.

Eine Diözese ohne Bischof „beherrscht die Heerde" unter uns in manchen Beziehungen, aber eine entscheidende oder ausübende Gewalt über die Geistlichkeit hat sie nicht; und Ephesus hatte keinen Bischof als Paulus die Aeltesten anredete, denn Timotheus ward erst einige Zeit nachher über diese Kirche gesetzt. Darum paßt das episkopalische Lehrgebäude vollkommen zu dieser Anrede, da sie sich auf keine gefolgerten und mitinbegriffenenen Rechte beruft, denn eine solche Berufung zu Gunsten der Aeltesten ist unnütz, ist willkürlich und ist daher eine ungesunde Auslegungsart.

Die Pflichten der Aeltesten von Ephesus, dargestellt Akt. 20, waren also nur pastoral, sie sollten die Heerde weiden, pflegen, regieren und Acht auf sie haben, und da sie auch über dieselbe wachten, sollten sie sie vor falschen Lehrern warnen. Wie sich St. Paulus anderwärts über die Pflichten der Bischöfe (Priester-Bischöfe) ausdrückt, sollten sie „versorgen die Kirche Gottes;" (1. Tim. 3 : 5.) unter der „Kirche" sind natürlich die Laien zu verstehen,

wie vorher in Bezug auf Akt. 20:28 bemerkt wurde. Oder wie St. Petrus diese Pflicht beschreibt, sollten sie „weiden die Heerde Christi, so ihnen befohlen sei.“ (1 Petr. 5:2.)

Dieses sind, wie wir glauben, alle in der Schrift berichteten Rechte, die den Aeltesten zustehen. Alle übrigen, dort besonders aufgeführten oder erwähnten höheren Rechte (ausgenommen die bloße Möglichkeit, daß die Aeltesten in der „Priesterschaft,“ welche, wie vorgegeben worden ist, den Timotheus ordinirt haben soll, mit Paulus zusammen gewirkt haben) werden beständig den Aposteln, oder den andern vorher erwähnten Personen, wie Timotheus, Titus, und den „Engeln“ der sieben Kirchen, zugeschrieben.

Vergleichet nun mit dieser Gesammt-Summe der Gewalt, die in der Schrift bloßen Aeltesten oder Priestern zugesprochen wird, die welche Timotheus zu Ephesus, der nämlichen Stadt und Gegend, in welcher die von Paulus Akt. 20 Angeredeten wohnten und amtirten, besaß. Sehet die zwei an diesen einzelnen Mann von dem großen Apostel gerichteten Episteln durch, und merket auf die bestimmte Art, in welcher das Recht die Geistlichkeit zu regieren und zu ordiniren ihm persönlich zugeschrieben wird — in jedem Theile der beiden Episteln wird er in der einheitlichen Zahl angeredet — „Dieses Gebot befehle ich Dir, mein Sohn Timotheus“ — „solches schreibe ich Dir, daß Du wissest, wie Du wandeln sollst in dem Hause Gottes“ — „wenn Du den Brüdern solches vorhältst.“ (1. Tim. 1:18; 3:14, 15; 4:6.)

Merket auf dieselbe Anrede an ihn in der einheitlichen Zahl, wenn von kirchlicher Regierung und Zucht die Rede ist — „daß Du gebötest Etlichen, daß sie nicht anders (nicht falsch) lehrten“ — „wider einen Aeltesten nimm (Du) keine Klage auf, außer zweien oder dreien Zeugen,“ — „die (diejenigen aus den Aeltesten, die also angeklagt werden) da sündigen, strafe (Du) Alle, auf daß sich auch die Andern fürchten,“ — „ich bezeuge Dir vor Gott . . . daß Du solches (diese Regeln geistlicher Zucht u. s. w.) hal-

test ohne eigen Gutdünkel, und nicht thust nach Gunst." (1. Tim. 1:3; 5:19, 20, 21.)

Betrachtet insonderheit sein Recht zu ordiniren — denn ihm theilt der Apostel mit, welche Eigenschaften Bischöfe (Priester-Bischöfe) und Diakonen haben müssen, „solches schreibe ich Dir;" (Tim. 3:1—14) — er wird weiterhin ermahnt in Bezug auf die Ordination dieser beiden niedern Grade, „Die Hände lege (Du) Niemand bald auf" — und wiederum, „was Du von mir gehört hast, das befiehl (Du) treuen Menschen, die da tüchtig sind auch Andern zu lehren," (1. Tim. 5:22; 2. Tim. 2:2.) d. h. Leuten, die so wohl gesund im Glauben sind, als auch zu lehren verstehen.

Bemerket ferner, obgleich Paulus den Aeltesten von Ephesus von Geistlichen sagt, „die da verkehrte Lehren reden würden," (Akt. 20:30,) so giebt er ihnen doch nicht einmal einen Wink, daß sie Kirchenzucht über solche Uebertreter üben sollten. Gegen Timotheus erwähnt er derselben Irrlehrer und zwar in Ausdrücken, die den zu Ephesus gebrauchten völlig gleich lauten, indem er sie bezeichnet als „Lehrer anderer oder falscher Lehren," und ermahnt ihn denselben Einhalt zu thun — „daß Du gebötest Etlichen, daß sie nicht anders lehrten" — und nachher wird hinzugefügt in Betreff der Geistlichen, welche auf diese oder andere Weise fehlen würden, „die da sündigen strafe (Du)." (1. Tim. 1:3; 5:20.) „Anders lehren" und „verkehrte Lehren reden" ist ein und dasselbe Vergehen; die Zurechtweisung desselben wird nirgends den Aeltesten aufgetragen, aber dem Timotheus wird sie hier ausdrücklich übertragen.

Ist es nicht einleuchtend, im höchsten Grade einleuchtend, daß Timotheus die höchste Gewalt über die Geistlichkeit zu Ephesus und das volle Recht zum Ordiniren hatte? Wenn wir diese verschiednen Stellen und den Ton und Geist der ganzeln Episteln mit der vorher angeführten Anrede an die Aeltesten zu Ephesus vergleichen, können wir dann noch einen bessern Beweis der Bischofswürde, oder eine bessere Widerlegung der Gleichheit verlangen? Bestand nicht die Geistlichkeit zu Ephesus aus drei Ordnun-

gen — nämlich Timotheus die erste, die Aeltesten (oder Priester-Bischöfe) die nächste, und die Diakonen die letzte? — Gewiß, so war es.

Vergleichet wiederum diese Anrede und alles, was von bloßen Aeltesten berichtet wird, mit der Epistel an Titum. Untersuchet seine Gewalt auf der Insel Creta. Ihm werden die nöthigen Fähigkeiten eines Priester-Bischofs oder Aeltesten angezeigt. (Tit. 1:6—9.) Seine klare Bevollmächtigung vom Apostel Paulus lautet: „Derhalben ließ ich Dich in Creta, daß Du solltest vollends anrichten, da ich es gelassen habe, und (daß Du) solltest besetzen die Städte hin und her mit Aeltesten, wie ich Dir befohlen habe," — und wiederum „einen ketzerischen Menschen (sollst Du) verwerfen,* wenn er einmal und abermal ermahnet ist." (Tit. 1:5; 3:10.)

Ordination, Ermahnung und Verwerfung (Absetzung oder Exkommunikation) werden also sämmtlich dem Titus persönlich übertragen. Den Aeltesten, wie schon bewiesen, war keine Gewalt gegeben zu „verwerfen" die, welche „verkehrte Lehren" oder „Ketzereien" verbreiten würden; Titus hatte diese Macht.† Alles stimmt vollkommen mit der Lage des Timotheus überein und nichts Derartiges kann aus irgend einer Stelle der Schrift von denen bewiesen werden, welche dort zum Unterschiede Aelteste oder Priester genannt werden. Ist es also nicht klar, daß die dem Titus zugeschriebenen Rechte ihn zu einem Amtsträger machen, der einen Grad höher steht als diejenigen, welche wir als solche bezeichnen müssen, die sich nur auf die heilige Urkunde von solchen Aeltesten stützen? Dieser Grad ist die Bischofswürde.

Vergleichet noch ferner alles, was von den Aeltesten berichtet wird, mit den Episteln an die „Engel" der sieben

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* Im Englischen steht "reject." Luther hat statt „verwerfen" „meiden" übersetzt. (Anm. des Uebersetzers.)

† Der von den Lehrern, welche die Aeltesten zu Ephesus nicht zu verdammen ermächtigt waren, gebrauchte Ausdruck „verkehrte Dinge," stimmt mit dem in Bezug auf die Ketzer, welche Titus zu verwerfen das Recht hatte, angewendeten „solcher ist verkehrt." Die Worte sind: *διεστραμμενα* und *εξεστραπται*.

Gemeinden in Asien (Offenb. C. 2 und 3.) Jede dieser Gemeinden wird angeredet nicht durch ihre Geistlichkeit im Ganzen, sondern durch ihren Engel oder höchsten Amtsträger, und dieses allein ist schon ein sehr starker Beweis gegen die Aemtergleichheit und für die Bischofswürde. Eine von diesen Gemeinden war Ephesus und wenn wir über ihren Engel lesen, „Du hast versucht die, so da sagen sie seien Apostel, und sind es nicht, und hast sie Lügner erfunden, (Offenb. 2:2,) brauchen wir weiter Zeugniß dafür, daß ihr höchster Amtsträger zur Zeit da dieses Buch geschrieben wurde, im Jahre 96, in Bezug auf das höchste Recht der Kirchenzucht über die Geistlichkeit, dasselbe war, was Timotheus, der höchste Amtsträger daselbst im Jahre 65, war?

Lasset uns nun auch andre Stellen untersuchen. In jeder dieser kleinen Episteln wird der „Engel" persönlich verantwortlich gemacht für die Irrthümer der in Rede stehenden Gemeinden, und wird persönlich gelobt für ihre erwähnten Verdienste, und das geschieht trotzdem, daß es in jeder dieser Gemeinden mehrere oder einige Aelteste gegeben haben muß, so wie es dreißig oder vierzig Jahre zuvor in Ephesus mehrere gab. (Akt. 20:17.)

Achtet auf den nachdrücklichen Gebrauch der einheitlichen Zahl in der Anrede an jeden dieser Engel — „ich weiß Deine Werke" (Offenb. 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15,) ist die deutliche und scharfe Anrede, an alle nach einander gerichtet, die auf die Verantwortlichkeit nicht einer Gemeinde im Ganzen, auch nicht ihrer Geistlichkeit im Ganzen, sondern auf die des Hauptes oder Lenkers persönlich schließen läßt.

Zu demselben Zwecke lesen wir als Lobpreisungen dieser Engel — „Du hältst an meinem Namen" — „Du hast auch wenige Namen, die nicht ihre Kleider besudelt haben" — „ich habe Dir gegeben eine offene Thür" — „Du hast eine kleine Kraft und (Du) hast mein Wort gehalten," (Offenb. 2:13; 3:4, 8.) — und andrerseits werden sie also getadelt — „ich habe ein Kleines wider Dich" — „Du lässest das Weib Jesabel . . . lehren, u. s. w." — „so Du nicht wirst wachen, werde ich

über Dich kommen, wie ein Dieb" — „Du bist weder kalt noch warm." (Offenb. 2:14, 20; 3:3, 15.)

Aehnlich lauten die Warnungen Christi an diese „Engel," die alle ihre persönliche Verantwortlichkeit für die Fehler der Gemeinde in sich schließen, — „Gedenke (Du) wovon Du gefallen bist, und thue (Du) Buße, und thue (Du) die ersten Werke" — „Thue (Du) Buße, wo aber nicht, so werde ich Dir bald kommen" — „Sei (Du) wacker und stärke (Du) das Andre, das sterben will" — „Halte (Du) was Du hast" — „So sei (Du) nun fleißig, und thue (Du) Buße." (Offenb. 2:5, 16; 3:2, 11, 19.) Und noch andre ähnliche Stellen giebt es, ja diese sieben Episteln bestehen in der That beinahe nur aus solchen.

Die Person, die der „Engel" genannt wird, wird in jedem Falle mit ihrer Gemeinde identificirt, und ihre Gemeinde wiederum mit ihr. Und in den wenigen Stellen, wo der Heiland die Ansprache an die Gemeinden in der Mehrzahl richtet, da ist sie an dieselben im Allgemeinen gerichtet, (Offenb. 2:10, 23—25,) und es wird keine besondre Rücksicht auf die Aeltesten genommen, als wenn auch sie bei der Verantwortlichkeit betheiligt wären. Im Gegentheil finden wir diesen ganz besonders strengen Ausspruch in der Ermahnung an den Engel der Gemeinde zu Ephesus, wo es, wie vollständig bewiesen worden ist, mehrere Aelteste oder Priester gab: „Ich werde Deinen Leuchter* (Deine Kirche) wegstoßen von seiner Stätte, wo Du nicht Buße thust" (Offenb. 2:5) — nicht die Gemeinde der Priesterschaft, nicht eben Deiner Priesterschaft, sondern „Deine Gemeinde." Sicherlich ist ein Diözesan (Bischof) hier!

Prüfet denn durch diese sieben Episteln, durch jede einzelne derselben und durch alle zusammen, die episkopalische und die presbyterianische Anschauungsweise und sehet zu, welche sowohl mit ihrem Buchstaben als mit ihrem Geist am besten stimmt: ganz gewiß verkündigen sie die Bischofswürde von Anfang bis zu Ende. Verbindet diese Episteln mit denen an Timotheus und Titus, und entschei-

* Offenb. 1:20 wird von den Leuchtern gesagt, daß sie die Gemeinden seien.

det dann ob sie nicht alle das Bischofthum verkündigen. Vergleichet ihr ganzes vereinigtes Zeugniß mit Allem, was in Bezug auf die Rechte bloßer Aeltesten berichtet wird, und lasset dann den Geist der Billigkeit und Unbefangenheit entscheiden, ob nicht das Bischofthum mit dem überschwänglichen Reichthum seiner in der Schrift begründeten Beweise gewiß den Sieg davonträgt.

Bemerket auch wohl, daß wir von solchen Schriftstellen, welche mit der Bischofswürde nur übereinstimmen, oder dazu dienen die Ereignisse in der apostolischen Kirche dieser Anschauungsweise gemäß zu erläutern, keinen Gebrauch gemacht haben, sondern nur von denen, welche den Beweis dafür enthalten. Und das, denken wir, genügt vollständig.

Nicht alle Gemüther würdigen einen Beweis gleichartig. Darum schlage man unsre Beweisführung immerhin zu ihrem geringsten Werthe an, und sie wird doch noch immer genügend sein. Giebt es irgend einen gleich kräftigen Beweis in der Schrift dafür, daß bloße Aelteste (oder Priester-Bischöfe) die Gewalt der höchsten Kirchenzucht über die Geistlichkeit oder das Recht hatten, ohne die Mitwirkung eines Geistlichen von höherer Vollmacht zu ordiniren? sicherlich giebt es keinen, wie wir vollständig bewiesen haben. Giebt es in der Schrift nicht manche unbedingt feststehende Beweise dafür, daß Personen von höherer Gewalt als die Aeltesten wirklich ordinirten und das höchste Recht der Kirchenzucht über die Geistlichkeit besaßen? sicherlich giebt es solche, wie wir solches mit mehr als überflüssigen Beweisen erhärtet haben.

Giebt es nicht außerdem feststehende Schriftbeweise dafür, daß diese hohen Rechte, die über denen stehen, welche bloßen Aeltesten zugeschrieben werden, auch andern Personen, als den ursprünglichen Aposteln, verliehen wurden und bis zu dem Zeitpunkte, von welchem das letzte inspirirte Buch datirt, im Besitze solcher Amtsträger geblieben sind? es kann vernünftigerweise nicht in Frage gestellt werden.

Mag nun der Leser alle diese Zeugnisse so wenig veranschlagen, als es ihm gefällt, so bleiben sie doch ein hin-

reichender Beweis für die Bischofswürde. Ein Wink über den Willen Gottes sollte für jeden demüthigen und gewissenhaften Gläubigen ein Befehl sein. Das geringste Uebergewicht eines Beweises sollte, wenn alles untersucht worden ist, für ein aufrichtiges Gemüth genügend sein.—

Mögen denn solche Betrachtungen bei denen ihr gehöriges Gewicht haben, die da meinen, daß unser Argument einer Demonstration nicht gleichkomme.

Wir glauben jedoch, daß es ernsten und genauen Forschern als ein solches erscheinen wird, das sich einem überzeugenden Beweise sehr stark annähert. Solche Forscher fragen wir—kann ein einziger Schritt gemacht werden um die Schrift zur Unterstützung der Aemtergleichheit anzuwenden, ohne gewisse Dinge als zugestanden zu nehmen.* Wenn es einen Beweis für die Gleichheit giebt, der von diesem Vorwurf frei ist, so erinnert sich der Schreiber dieses Aufsatzes nicht ihn gesehen zu haben. Ist aber nicht andrerseits der biblische Beweis für die Bischofswürde eine regelrechte Folgerung aus biblischen Thatsachen? Wir sind der Meinung, daß kein unparteiischer Sinn verneinend antworten wird.

Darum behaupten wir zum Schluß, daß die Bischofswürde allein das Zeugniß der inspirirten Schriftsteller für sich hat. Alle Thatsachen, alle Beispiele, sie berichten, ohne eine klare Ausnahme, ja sie beweisen, daß solche das Amt des apostolischen Zeitalters war. Darum fügen wir nun folgende andre Behauptung hinzu—nämlich, daß sie das Amt war, auf welches der Apostel hinwies, da er schrieb: „Gedenket an eure Lehrer, die euch das Wort Gottes gesagt haben .... Gehorchet euren Lehrern und folget ihnen, denn sie wachen über eure Seelen, als die da Rechenschaft dafür geben sollen."* (Hebr. 13: 7, 17.) Ob eine solche Vorschrift, zusammengenommen mit dem, was in diesem Aufsatz bewiesen worden ist, nicht die Höhe eines inspirirten Befehles dem bischöflichen Amte zu gehorchen erreicht, wird rücksichtsvoll den Gewissen unsrer Leser überlassen, unter Gebet für ihre rechte Leitung und Entscheidung.

* Siehe wegen Hebr. 13 : 7, 17, die Anmerkung auf Seite 14.

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RAISONS

POUR ETRE MEMBRE

DE L'EGLISE PROTESTANTE EPISCOPALE.

JE SUIS MEMBRE DE L'EGLISE PROTESTANTE EPISCOPALE

1. Parceque j'aime et je demande l'unité. Je sais que les divisions inutiles sont bien criminelles, que l'Apôtre nous dit de remarquer ceux qui causent la division et de les éviter; de là je sens la nécessité d'être en communion avec l'Eglise qui est *une*, et a été *une*, dans tous les siècles.

JE SUIS MEMBRE DE L'EGLISE PROTESTANTE EPISCOPALE

2. Parceque l'Eglise d'Angleterre, de la quelle dérive l'Eglise Protestante Episcopale d'Amerique, est une des *anciennes branches* de la Sainte Eglise Catholique de Christ. Il est vrai, à la vérité, que dans un temps elle a été obscurcie et souillée par les erreurs et les superstitions de Rome, mais Dieu dans sa miséricorde, a bien voulu, à l'époque de la Réforme, donner à ses Evêques et au clergé, la force de rejeter, avec l'aide de l'autorité régnante, le pouvoir usurpé du Pape, de purifier l'Eglise de ses erreurs, et enfin, de la rendre à son état primitif. Ainsi notre Eglise-mère est l'*Ancienne Eglise* d'Angleterre, qui n'a pas été formeé alors mais seulement réformée; et sa fille dans les Etats-Unis, datant de l'époque de la colonisation du pays par les Anglais, est ici l'Eglise de Christ.

JE SUIS MEMBRE DE L'EGLISE PROTESTANTE EPISCOPALE

3. Parceque les ministers de l'Eglise sont *tous ordonnés* par des Evêques qui seuls ont autorité d'envoyer des ouvriers dans la vigne de Christ, puisqu' ils sont les successeurs des Apôtres, et autres Saints hommes, comme Timothée, Tite, et les Evêques (ou anges) des sept Eglises d'Asie, qui reçurent le pouvoir d'ordonner des ancients et de gouverner l'Eglise.

JE SUIS MEMBRE DE L'EGLISE PROTESTANTE EPISCOPALE

4. Parceque j'attache beaucoup de valeur aux avantages que Christ a promis à ceux qui recoivent dignement ses Sacrements Saints; et je ne puis pas être certain que des personnes aient

le pouvoir de les administrer, si ce n'est celles qui ont été ordonnées par des Evêques, et qui ainsi sont les vrais ministres de la Sainte Eglise Catholique et Apostolique de Christ.

Je suis membre de l'Eglise Protestante Episcopale

5. Parceque l'Eglise est la gardienne et la dépositaire fidèle des grandes vérités de l'Evangile qui ont été autrefois confiées aux Saints. Ses *Symboles* et ses *Offices* ont toujours été un puissant moyen pour préserver les hommes de l'erreur, et, par la grâce de Dieu, ont empêché plusieurs personnes de corrompre la vérité en y substituant les traditions des hommes, ou leurs propres interprétations, non autorisées, de la parole de Dieu, pour l'enseignement de l'Eglise Catholique. Il n' y a pas d'Eglise qui tienne plus fermement, ou enseigne plus clairement les *Grandes Vérités* de la trinité dans l'unité; de la chute et de l'entière corruption de l'homme; du sacrifice, de l'oblation et de la satisfaction entière, parfaite et suffisante de notre Sauveur Jesus-Christ pour les péchés de tout le monde; de l'importance de prévenir et de nourrir les influences du Sainte Esprit, pour la sanctification de nos âmes et de la nécessité d'avoir une foi vive pour être justifié devant Dieu. Et aucune Eglise n' a mieux rendu témoignage aux *Sacrements* de l'Evangile, attestant leur pouvoir et soutenant qu' ils sont le moyen et le gage des fidèles participants de cette union de l'âme avec Christ, qui seul est la source de toute vie et de toute force et sans lequel nous ne pouvons pas plaire à Dieu.

Je suis membre de l'Eglise Protestante Episcopale

6. Parceque l'Eglise honnore tellement la Bible, qu'elle présente tous les jours, à ses membres, quelques parties considérables de la parole de vie; on peut en vérité dire, que la plus grande partie de ses offices est tirée de l'Ecriture. Chaque année elle relit *douze fois* tous les Psaumes, *deux fois* les Evangiles et les Actes des Apôtres, *trois fois* les Epitres et plusieurs portions considérables des livres historiques et prophétiques de l'Ancien Testament, outre les Epitres et les Evangiles pour chaque Dimanche, et cela ajouté aux passages presque *innombrables* de l'Ecriture qui sont mèles avec la substance de ses diverses prières et actions de grâce fait que son service est tout a fait scriptural.

Je suis membre de l'Eglise Protestante Episcopale

7. Parceque j'admire et aime les *Prières* de *l'Eglise.* Je les trouve si scripturalles, si simples, si ferventes et si compréhensibles, aucune autres ne peu les égaler. Je trouve dans

elles tout ce dont j' ai besoin : elles m'aident a prier, elles me fournissent des paroles pour mes dévotions privées. J'apprends d'elles ce que je dois croire et ce que je dois faire. Quand j'y prends part, je me rappelle que je me sers des paroles mêmes qui ont servi a une grande partie de l'Eglise Catholique de Christ, pendant des centaines d'années, pour faire connaitre à Dieu leurs demandes ; et ainsi en priant il me semble me joindre en communion avec les Saints qui sont dans leur repos ; il me semble que je m'approche de l'assemblée généralle de l'Eglise primitive, dont les noms sont écrits au ciel, et aux esprits des justes devenus parfaits ; il me semble que je suis plus uni à la seule Eglise Catholique de Christ.

Je suis membre de l'Eglise Protestante Episcopale

8. Parceque l'Eglise enseigne et forme ses enfants avec beaucoup de soin et de sagesse ; pour chaque époque de la vie pour chaque occasion importante, elle a ses offices solennels. Dans l'enfance, elle nous recoit par le baptême au nombre des fidèles, exigeant des parrains qui promettent de voir à notre éducation chrétienne. Dans la jeunesse, elle nous amène à l'Evêque pour être confirmé, afin de recevoir par là, une augmentation de grâce, et pour renouveler en notre propre nom, les promesses solennelles qui ont été faites pour nous lorsque nous étions enfants. Ensuite elle nous appele à la Sainte Table du Seigneur, et nous invite à recevoir spirituellement le corps et le sang du Christ, avec un cœur repentant et une vraie foi, afin de nous tenir en communion avec le Seigneur de nos âmes, et gagner de la force pour combattre avec succès contre nos ennemis. Si la maladie vient nous surprendre, elle a un office qui excite l'indifferent et soulage le pénitent ; et même quand Dieu a rappelé à lui l'âme du chrétien, l'Eglise avec beaucoup de paroles d'espérance, d'action de grâce et de joie, remet le corps à la terre, et répand ses consolations dans le cœur des amis en deuil ; ainsi depuis l'enfance à la tombe l'Eglise prend soin de nous : elle est toujours là pour avertir, soulager et diriger le plus humble et le plus pauvre, aussi bien que le plus noble de ses enfants ; elle s'occupe de nous, dans la maladie et dans la santé, dans la prospérité et dans l'adversitié, dans la joie et dans le peine, dans la vie et à la mort : et pour cette raison, parmi bien d'autres, j'adhère à sa communion.

Je suis membre de l'Eglise Protestante Episcopale

9. Parceque l'Eglise d'Angleterre et d'Amérique ont possédé tant d'hommes éminemment instruits et saints. Des milliers de personnes, de beaucoup supérieures à moi en savoir et en vraie sainteté, ont trouvé tout ce qu'elles désiraient dans l'Eglise, elles

ont aimé ses offices, approuvé son ordre, et étant nourries et parfectionnées par ses enseignements, elles ont pensé que c'était une trés-grande faveur de vivre et de mourir dans sa communion.

Je suis membre de l'Eglise Protestante Episcopale

10. Parceque l'Eglise d'Angleterre et d'Amérique est l'Eglise de plusieurs amis chers qui sont maintenant dans leur repos ; ils ont reçu d'elle leur connaisance de l'Evangile ; ils ont adore Dieu dans ses temples saints, ils ont reçu les sacrements des mains de ses ministres, ses offices étaient leur consolation ; elle les a élevés dans la sainteté et la crainte de Dieu ; or ce qui leur a été suffisant et sanctifiant peut l'être aussi pour moi, si je cherche humblement la grâce de Dieu pour faire bon usage de mes priviléges. De plus j'ai déja beaucoup appris de ses ministres et de ses offices, et c'est ma propre faute si je n'ai pas appris davantage. Pourquoi ne continurais-je pas à marcher dans *l'ancienne voie* où moi et tant autres avons trouvé le repos de nos âmes ?

Je suis membre de l'Eglise Protestante Episcopale

11. Parceque l'Eglise est admirablement bien adaptée à toutes les conditions et à chaque classe de la société, le pauvre aussi bien que le riche partage les provisions qu'elle a faites pour leur bien-être spirituel. Tous trouvent en elle une mère qui les nourrit, et qui les unit ensemble par les liens les plus forts, leur enseignant ici bas, par l'influence de son système, à vivre dans une union éternelle dans le royaume de la gloire.

Je suis membre de l'Eglise Protestante Episcopale

12. Parceque je sais de quel avantage l'Eglise *a été* et *est* pour le monde : elle a été le moyen, dans la main de Dieu, d'élever bien des âmes à la gloire. Si ce n'avait été ses efforts, plusieurs endroits de ce pays n'auraient jamais entendu prononcer le nom de Christ. Dieu a merveilleusement béni ses traveaux ; jamais ses ministres n'ont été si zélés qu'a présent, ses églises si nombreuses, ses écoles si bien fréquentées et dans aucun temps elle n'a pu compter tant de dévoués Chrétiens dans son sein.

Pour ces Raisons je suis membre de l'Eglise Protestante Episcopale

13. Dieu veuille me donner la grâce de faire honneur à ma profession, de faire bon usage de mes hauts priviléges, d'être chrétien non seulment de nom, mais en vérité, et ainsi de faire honneur à la doctrne de Dieu Mon Sauveur en toutes choses.

Traduit par G. C. D. Gauthier.

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Gründe,

warum ich ein Glied der protestantisch = bischöflichen Kirche bin.

Ich bin ein Glied der prot. bischöfl. Kirche.

1. Weil ich Einigkeit liebe und für dieselbe bete. Ich weiß, daß Spaltungen sündlich sind; daß uns der Apostel sagt: auf die zu achten und die zu meiden, die Uneinigkeit erregen; ich halte es demnach für Pflicht, mich zu einer Kirche zu bekennen, die ein Ganzes bildet und ein Ganzes zu allen Zeiten gewesen ist.

Ich bin ein Glied der prot. bischöfl. Kirche.

2. Weil die englische Kirche, von der die prot. bischöfl. Kirche in Amerika abstammt, einer der ursprünglichen Zweige der heiligen christlichen Kirche ist. Es ist wohl wahr, daß sie eine Zeit lang von den Irrthümern und durch den Aberglauben Roms verdunkelt und entweiht worden ist, Gott hat aber, zur Zeit der Reformation, ihre Bischöfe und Geistlichkeit überhaupt, unterstützt von der Regierung, in den Stand gesetzt, die angemaaßte Gewalt des Pabstes abzuschütteln, die Kirche von den Irrthümern zu reinigen und sie auf ihre ursprüngliche Reinheit zurückzuführen. Demnach ist zur Zeit der Reformation unsere Mutterkirche, die alt-englische, nicht erst gegründet, sondern nur reformirt worden und ihre Tochterkirche in den Verein. Staaten, die gleiches Alter mit der ersten Niederlassung der Engländer hier zu Lande hat, ist hierselbst die Kirche Christi.

Ich bin ein Glied der prot. bischöfl. Kirche.

3. Weil die Geistlichkeit dieser Kirche durchgängig von Bischöfen geweiht sind, die einzig und allein die Gewalt haben, Arbeiter in des Herrn Weinberg zu senden; denn sie sind die Nachfolger der Apostel und anderer heiligen Männer, wie: Timotheus, Titus und der Bischöfe (oder Engel) der sieben Gemeinden Asiens, denen die Gewalt verliehen worden war, Aelteste zu weihen und die Kirche zu regieren.

Ich bin ein Glied der prot. bischöfl. Kirche.

4. Weil ich die Segnungen hochschätze, die Christus denen verheißen, die seine heiligen Sacramente recht- und regelmäßig empfangen und weil ich Keinem die Gewalt zuerkenne, dieselben zu spenden, als einem recht- und ordnungsmäßig von Bischöfen Geweihten, wodurch ein solcher ein wahrer Diener der heiligen christlichen apostolischen Kirche wird.

Ich bin ein Glied der prot. bischöfl. Kirche.

5. Weil die Kirche ein treuer Hüter und Zeuge der großen Wahrheiten des Evangeliums ist, welche einst den Gemeinden überliefert wurden. Ihre Glaubensbekenntnisse und Gebetsformulare haben die Menschen immer vor Irrthümern bewahrt und haben es Vielen durch Gottes Segen unmöglich gemacht, die Wahrheit zu entstellen und statt ihrer, Menschensatzungen als Lehrsätze der christlichen Kirche aufzustellen. Keine Kirche erkennt und lehrt klarer den Lehrsatz der heiligen Dreieinigkeit als ein einiges Ganze; den Fall und das völlige Sünden-Verderben des Menschen; ferner: daß das Opfer Jesu Christi für die Sünden der Welt vor Gott Genugthuung geleistet, daß der heilige Geist mit seiner erlösenden und heiligmachenden Gnade für uns unentbehrlich sei und daß endlich nur ein vollkommener Glaube an den in Christo offenbarten Gott uns rechtfertigen kann Keine Kirche ist eine treuere Bewahrerin der christlichen Sacramente, keine glaubt fester an ihre Kraft und keine erklärt sie besser als Gnadenmittel und als Pfänder der Lebensgemeinschaft mit Christus für Alle, die sie gläubig empfangen, und keine erklärt sie mehr als Quelle alles Lebens und aller Kraft, und daß wir ohne dieselben Gott nicht wohlgefällig sein können.

Ich bin ein Glied der prot. bischöfl. Kirche.

6. Weil diese Kirche die heilige Schrift als die Grundquelle aller christlichen Erkenntniß betrachtet; weil sie ihren Gliedern täglich lange Abschnitte aus dem Worte des Lebens mittheilt; ja, man kann sagen, daß der größte Theil der Gebete der heiligen Schrift entlehnt sind. Jedes Jahr werden durchgelesen: zwölf mal die Psalmen, zwei mal die Evangelien und die Apostelgeschichte, drei mal die Episteln und außerdem reiche Abschnitte der geschichtlichen und prophetischen Bücher des alten Testaments; außerdem die für jeden Sonntag bestimmten Episteln und Evangelien und dazu noch die unzähligen Stellen der heiligen Schrift, welche in die verschiedenen Gebete und Lobpreisungen eingewoben sind. So kann man also ihren Gottesdienst als einen rein biblischen bezeichnen.

Ich bin ein Glied der prot. bischöfl. Kirche.

7. Weil die Gebete dieser Kirche Verstand und Herz gleich sehr ergreifen. Ich finde sie so biblisch, klar, inbrünstig und allumfassend, daß sie in der That beispiellos dastehen. Ich finde in denselben Alles, was ich bedarf; sie erheben mich im öffentlichen Gottesdienste und sind mir

die besten Anleitungen für meine Hausandacht. Ich entnehme denselben die reichsten Gründe meines Glaubens und meiner heiligen Verpflichtungen. In ihren Andachtsübungen habe ich stets das Gefühl, dieselben Worte zu gebrauchen, in den schon vor langen Jahrhunderten die Väter der einen großen heiligen Kirche Christi ihre Herzen vor Gott ausgeschüttet haben, so daß ich mich, wenn ich bete, in Gemeinschaft mit den längst verewigten Gläubigen wähne. Dann ist mir, als träte ich in die große Versammlung und Kirche der Auserwählten, deren Namen im Buche des Lebens stehen und als verkehrte ich mit den Geistern der selig Vollendeten und ich fühle mich mehr und mehr in inniger Lebensgemeinschaft mit der einen heiligen Kirche des Herrn.

Ich bin ein Glied der prot. bischöfl. Kirche.

8. Weil diese Kirche eine weise und besorgte Erzieherin und Lehrerin ihrer Kinder ist; für jede Lage und für jeden entscheidenden Abschnitt des Lebens hat sie ihre feierlichen Kirchenacte. Das hülflose Kind nimmt sie durch die heilige Taufe in die Gemeinde der Gläubigen auf und verlangt Taufpathen, die geloben müssen, für deren christliche Erziehung zu sorgen. In früher Jugend stellt sie uns dem Bischof zur Confirmation vor, um gestärkt zu werden im Glauben, und um mit unserem Munde die heiligen Gelübde zu erneuern, welche unsere Pathen einst für uns abgelegt haben. Alsdann ladet sie uns zum heiligen Tische des Herrn, den Leib und das Blut Christi geistig mit herzinniger Reue und aufrichtigem Glauben zu genießen, damit wir in stetiger Lebens-Gemeinschaft mit dem Hirten unserer Seele bleiben und mit Erfolg den Erzfeind unserer Seligkeit bekämpfen. Sollte uns Krankheit befallen, dann betrachten wir sie als göttliche Schickung den Sorglosen aufzurütteln, und den Reumüthigen zu stärken; und selbst dann, wenn Gott die Seele des Christen zu sich genommen, übergiebt die Kirche mit Worten der Hoffnung, des Dankes und der Freude den Körper der Muttererde und gießt ihre Tröstungen in das Herz der trauernden Hinterlassenen. Die Kirche sorgt also für uns von der Wiege bis zum Grabe, für das niedrigste und ärmste sowohl, als für das vornehmste ihrer Kinder, im Wohlergehen und Krankheit, in Glück und Unglück, in Freud und Leid, im Leben und im Tod, ist sie immer nahe mit Warnung, Trost und Leitung und aus diesen und anderen Gründen halte ich an der Kirchen-Gemeinschaft fest.

Ich bin ein Glied der prot. bischöfl. Kirche.

9. Weil die Kirche von England und Amerika eine solche Wolke ausgezeichnet gelehrter und gläubiger Männer aufzuweisen hat. Tausende, an Wissenschaft und gottseligen Lebenswandel, mir weit überlegen, haben in der Kirche die Befriedigung ihrer tiefsten Seelenbedürfnisse gefunden; sie haben ihre Gottesdienste geliebt, ihre Kirchenordnung gebilligt, sie fanden durch ihre Lehren Seelennahrung und Lebensvollendung und im Leben wie im Sterben fanden darin sie ihren höchsten Segen, Glieder dieser Kirche zu sein.

Ich bin ein Glied der prot. bischöfl. Kirche.

10. Weil die Kirche von England und Amerika, die Kirche so vieler theurer Freunde gewesen, die nun im Schooße ihres Erlösers ruhen; ihr verdankten sie das Wort Gottes; in ihren heiligen Vorhöfen pflegten sie der Andacht; die Hand ihrer Diener spendeten ihnen die heiligen Sacramente; ihr Gottesdienst war ihr Trost; sie erzog sie zur Heiligung und Gottesfurcht; und was sie befriedigte und ihnen Segen war, das kann auch mir Segen werden, wenn ich demüthig von Gott die Gnade erflehe, das Recht meiner Gotteskindschaft zu wahren. Und mehr als dies verdanke ich ihren Dienern und ihrem Gottesdienste und wenn ich nicht noch mehr von ihnen gelernt habe, so ist es mein eigener Fehler und meine Sünde. Warum sollte ich nicht auf denselben Pfad wandeln, auf welchem ich und Andere ihre Seelenruhe gefunden?

Ich bin ein Glied der prot. bischöfl. Kirche.

11. Weil die Kirche die besonderen Bedürfnisse eines jeden Standes in der Gemeinde auf wunderbare Weise befriedigt. Der Aermste wie der Reichste nimmt gleich Theil an dem reichen Schatze ihrer geistigen Segnungen. Alle finden in ihr die zärtliche Mutter, sie Alle umschließend mit den festesten Banden und sie hienieden erziehend in den Lehren der streitenden Kirche, für die ewige Seligkeit in den Regionen der siegreichen Kirche.

Ich bin ein Glied der prot. bischöfl. Kirche.

12. Weil ich sehe und höre, welch ein großer Segen die Kirche für unser Land ist und gewesen ist; sie ist in Gottes Hand das Mittel gewesen, viele ihrer Söhne für die Laufbahn des Ruhmes zu bilden, denn ohne ihre Mission würde an vielen Orten dieses Landes der Name Christi nie gehört worden sein. Gott hat ihr Werk wunderbar gesegnet und zu keiner Zeit waren ihre Diener so voll Eifer, als jetzt: ihre Kirchen so zahlreich, ihre Schulen so regelmäßig besucht und zu keiner Zeit zählte sie so viele fromme Christen in ihrem Schooße.

Aus diesen Gründen bin ich ein Glied der prot. bischöfl. Kirche.

Mag Gott mir die Gnade verleihen, meinem Bekenntnisse Ehre zu machen, meine hohen Vorrechte zu genießen; nicht ein Namens- sondern ein Thatchrist zu sein und die Lehre von Gott, meinem Erlöser, alle Wege meines Lebens als Wahrheit zu erweisen.

Protestantisch-bischöfliche Tractat-Gesellschaft. New-York.

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L'EGLISE LA MERE NOURRICE

DE

SON PEUPLE

A cette question de Caïn "Suis-je le gardien de mon frère?" à peine trouve-t-on une voix qui ne réponde: tout homme est le gardien de son semblable, autant que la divine Providence lui donne les moyens de l'assister.

Lorsqu'on lit la parabole du bon Samaritain, nous sommes prêts à en faire l'application; et nous disons desuite; que non seulement nous devons regarder comme notre prochain ceux à qui nous pouvons faire du bien, mais que ce prochain, nous devons le secourir autant qu'il est en notre pouvoir.

De même, quand la fille de Pharaon trouve l'enfant Moïse dans le coffret de jonc parmi les roseaux du fleuve, fait venir une femme des Hébreux, et dit: "Emporte cet enfant et me l'allaite, et je te donnerai ton salaire," tout cœur approuvera cette conduite et trouvera juste qu'en pareil cas" on aille faire de même."

Mais si les devoirs de tutelle, de bienveillance et de sympathie sont ainsi sentis et reconnus quand il ne s'agit que des individus, ne doivent-ils pas être sentis et reconnus quand il est question de l'Eglise, qui est un corps de personnes réunies ensemble par la parole et le ministère du Seigneur Jésus. Un tel corps n'est-il pas tenu de garder, de guider et d'aider la multitude qui périt faute d'instruction?

Arrêtons-nous un peu plus, particulièrement sur cette conduite de la fille de Pharaon, servons-nous en pour démontrer notre argument. Elle trouve un enfant dénué; et suivant les impulsions d'un bon cœur, elle choisit une nourrice pour cet enfant et le confie à ses soins. Or,

l'Eglise n'a pas seulement un enfant, elle en a beaucoup de confiés à ses soins. Et sa protection est d'autant plus importante, que ni les enfants, ni leurs parents ne chercheront jamais, d'eux-même, pris en masse, cette éducation qui seule peut les préparer pour l'éternité. Or donc l'Eglise certainement peut, comme la fille de Pharaon, exercer une tutelle convenable sur les annèes de l'enfance et sur chaque époque de la vie ; mais si elle comprend bien sa responsabilité devant Dieu et devant les hommes, elle doit toujours le faire. Ce qui est devoir, quand il n'est question que d'un seul enfant, doit être devoir pour l'Eglise, quand des millions de créatures meurent, et que les âmes de ces millions sont confiées à ses soins.

Tels étant les devoirs et la charge de l'Eglise, une question peut naturellement se présenter ici à quiconqui s'en occupe honêtement, savoir : l'Eglise s'est-elle fidèlement acquittée de ce devoir solennel qui lui est ainsi imposé ? Peut-on véritablement dire d'elle, comme de la mère de Moïse quand on l'eut chargée du soin de son enfant, " La femme prit l'enfant et l'allaita." La question étant, dans mon opinion, de la plus haute importance, particulièrement dans ce moment, mon désir est d'y répondre.

A cette fin, considérons les différents moyens que l'Eglise a cru devoir prendre relativement à la conduite de chaque enfant que Dieu dans sa Providence a confié ainsi à ses soins. Cela étant fait, je laisserai tous mes chers, honnêtes, justes, quoique crédules et variables compatriotes, prononcer un jugement pour ou contre l'Eglise, selon qu'ils croiront devoir faire.

L'Eglise épie le moment où elle doit prendre l'enfant sous sa tutelle. Comme elle le sait " conçu dans le péché et né dans l'iniquité " elle ne perd pas de temps à inviter les parents à le consacrer, par le divin sacrement du Baptême, au saint et bienheureux service de Dieu. Elle leur fait connaitre les priviléges inestimables de ce sacrement. Elle leur parle des promesses glorieuses qui y sont attachées. Elle assemble la congrégation—elle exige que les parents choisissent des personnes qui entreprendront avec ferveur, de voir à ce que cet enfant soit élevé pour l'éternité. Elle appelle alors son ministre pour consacrer cet enfant à Dieu par un acte public et solennel. Et quel langage humain peut surpasser ce qu'il ya a de touchant

intérêt dans ce que nous appelons "le service Baptismal." Quel est le parent dont le cœur, à moins qu'il ne soit endurci dans le péché et indifférent pour tout ce qui est bon, ne palpite pas, quand le ministre prononce "ces paroles sur son cher enfant:" Je te baptise au nom du Père et du Fils et du Saint-Esprit: nous recevons cet enfant dans la compagnie de l'Eglise de Jésus-Christ, et nous le marquons du signe de la croix, pour signifier que désormais il n'aura point honte de confesser la foi de Christ crucifié; mais qu'il combattra vaillamment sous son étendard contre le péché, le monde et le diable; et qu'il sera constamment fidèle soldat de Christ et le servira jusqu'à la fin de sa vie." De plus, combien sont solennelles les obligations que l'Eglise impose aux parrains et aux marraines d'instruire l'enfant: "Que cet enfant soit instruit, aussitôt qu'il en sera capable, du vœu, de la promesse, et de la profession solennelle qu'il a faite ici par vous, afin que comme Christ est mort et ressuscité pour nous, nous aussi qui sommes baptisés, nous mourrions au péché, et ressuscitions à la justice."

Tel étant le cas, laissez-moi vous demander, si l'Eglise ne doit pas être considerée comme étant fidèle dans ce premier acte de son devoir pour l'enfant confié à ses soins. N'est-ce pas un point de la plus haute importance dans l'histoire morale de l'enfant, que, quand la connaissance du bien et du mal se réveille en lui, il se trouve solennellement consacré à Dieu, séparé d'un monde pervers—et engagé au service de celui qui l'aime et l'a racheté de son propre sang? Est-ce un léger avantage qu'il sente que sa nature corrompue est tenue en échec par ces formalités extérieures; qu'il apprenne qu'il est introduit comme membre dans la famille de Dieu, et qu'il est devenu un objet d'intérêt réel pour chaque véritable membre de cette famille? N'est-ce pas une bénédiction sans mesure, que d'avoir nos chers enfants, dès les premiers jours de leur existence, entourés, pour ainsi dire, de la tutelle spéciale de Dieu et recommandés aux prières, aux souhaits et aux sympathies de tous ses serviteurs? Mais passons à un antre point.

ii. L'enfant ainsi baptisé commence bientôt à sentir, plus ou moins, la puissance du péché et de la corruption qui demeure en lui, les tentations du monde et les assauts du diable. A cette époque critique, l'Eglise continue de

s'en occuper avec l'anxiété d'une mère. Et d'abord elle lui met en main un "Catéchisme" qui contient tous les principes fondamentaux de la foi chrétienne; et ainsi le pourvoit, dès ses premières années, d'un abrégé des leçons, des préceptes, des avertissements, des promesses ét des invitations de l'entière parole de Dieu.

Ce n'est pas tout; connaissant les dangers auxquels son pupile est exposé à cette époque difficile de la vie, elle a recours aux armures de l'Ecriture comme nouvelles armes de défense. Elle sent convenable que l'enfant ne soit plus laissé simplement aux obligations, quelqué solennelles qu'elles soient, d'un contrat signé et scellé, pour lui, par la main d'un autre. Et tel est ce qu'on appelle le baptême de l'enfant. Les répondants dans cette occasion remplissent, pour l'enfant, un devoir qu'il ne peut remplir lui-même. Dans le rite apostolique de "la confirmation" elle appelle l'enfant pour le lui faire ratifier, et confirmer solennellement tous ces engagements en son propre nom. Et peut-on trouver une cérémonie religieuse plus touchante que ce nouvel acte de consécration à Dieu? Qui n'a pu, le cœur le plus dur, en être attendri? Quel est l'esprit qui pense et observe, et peut s'empêcher de regarder cette époque dans l'histoire d'une jeune personne, comme de la derniere importance? Il y a peu de personnes qui, sérieusement élevées dans la religion et introduites à ce rite dans l'esprit que requiert l'église, aient pu sentir sans émotion la main de l'Evêque posée sur leur tête, ou entendre sans être émues cette prière solennelle:

"Nous te supplions de les fortifier, O Seigneur, par la communication du St. Esprit, le Consolateur, et d'angmenter chaque jour en eux les dons divers de la grâce, l'esprit de sagesse et d'intelligence, l'esprit de conseil et de force spirituelle, l'esprit de science et de vraie piété: et remplis-les, Seigneur, de l'esprit de ta sainte crainte, dès maintenant et à jamais."

"Protége ton serviteur, O Seigneur, par la vertu de la grâce céleste, afin qu'il soit à jamais au nombre des tiens, et qu'il croisse chaque jour, de plus en plus, dans ton Saint-Esprit jusqu'à ce qu'il parvienne à ton royaume éternel."

Ce rite, on peut l'observer, parait répondre à plusieurs objections alléguées par la classe de Chrêtiens connus sous la dénomination de Baptistes, contre le Baptême des enfants. Il est vrai que l'enfant ne sait rien, et que les obli-

gations qu'il contracte doivent être à cet égard comparativement imparfaites. Mais cette jeune personne s'instruit pendant l'intervalle de l'enfance à la jeunesse. Et en vérité pourrait-il y avoir une époque plus propre que celle-ci pour consacrer solennellement et volontairement tout l'homme, corps, âme et esprit, au service d'un maître crucifié ? Tandis que la confirmation assure à nos enfants, les priviléges du Baptême des enfants,—tandis qu'elle fait connaitre aux enfants baptisés dans le bas âge la faveur et la grande bonté de Dieu envers eux—elle leur donne aussi cet avantage du Baptême adulte, en les appelant à la contemplation solennelle du vœu baptismal, à une période de la vie où ces obligations peuvent être comprises et senties. L'Eglise leur donne d'abord, dans le Baptême des enfants, un rite qui a l'analogie de l'Ancien Testament et la pratique du Nouveau comme sa sanction et son commandement. Et elle ajoute à ceci, un autre rite qui s'adresse le plus fortement à la conscience et au cœur, et qui met en usage tous les moyens possibles pour changer la profession en principe—la religion nominale en réelle—et transformer l'homme marqué du signe extérieur de la croix, en un homme qui porte la croix dans son cœur et au milieu des devoirs et des difficultés de la vie.

iii. Mais l'enfant étant ainsi " confirmé" l'Eglise croit-elle tout son devoir rempli, et en conséquence peut-elle abandonner l'enfant aux dangers du monde et aux assauts du grand ennemi : le saint volume, duquel elle tire ses principes et ses pratiques, lui défend d'agir ainsi ; une pareille négligence ne saurait être autorisée par la nature et les circonstances où se trouve l'homme : connaissant et notre faiblesse et notre corruption ; croyant que par la grâce et par la grâce seule, le chrétien se maintient ; persuadé que son salut dépend entièrement des communications, de chaque jour et de chaque heure, de l'esprit de Dieu ; elle s'avance alors pour inviter l'enfant confié à ses soins à la participation de l'auguste sacrement de l'Evangile, " le sacrement de la cène du Seigneur :" son maître lui a solennellement ordonné, dans ses derniers moments et presqu'avec ses dernières paroles, de participer à ce sacrement. Il a mis à part les éléments sacrés, le pain et le vin pour emblêmes de son propre corps et de son propre sang. Et pour se rendre à sa volonté, elle impose à ceux qui marchent dans

les sentiers glissants de la vie, le devoir impérieux de venir à sa sainte table, de s'approcher ainsi de la croix de celui qui est l'ami, le Pasteur et le Sauveur de son peuple, pour obtenir le pardon, la lumière et la vie,—la grâce de le servir ici-bas, et l'etat convenable pour partager avec lui la gloire de l'éternité. Et avec quelle anxiété, quelle ferveur et quels sentiments n'inspire-t-elle pas ce devoir à ses en fants! "Vous savez," dit-elle, et vous chers frères que vous écoutiez ces paroles fortes et solennelles, cette invitation pressante et charitable! "vous savez combien, c'est cruel et offensant pour un homme qui a préparé un riche festin et couvert sa table des mets les plus exquis, de voir, quand il n'y manque plus que ses conviés, qu'ils refusent d'y venir sans aucune juste raison. Qui est celui d'entre vous qui, dans un cas semblable, ne serait indigné, et ne se croirait pas méprisé et insulté? Prenez donc garde, mes frères bien-aimés en Jésus-Christ; prenez garde qu'en vous abstenant de cette Sainte Cène vous ne provoquiez contre vous la colère de Dieu. Quant à moi," commande-t-elle à son ministre d'ajouter, "je serai prêt et selon le devoir de ma charge, je vous convie au nom de Dieu, je vous appelle de la part de Jésus-Christ, je vous exhorte, si votre salut vous est cher, à venir participer à cette sainte communion. Jugez donc quelle injure vous feriez à Dieu en refusant de lui obéir, et par conséquent quel jugement vous attireriez sur vos têtes en vous abstenant volontairement de la Table du Seigneur, et en vous séparant de vos frères qui viennent se repaître d'une nourriture toute céleste dans ce banquet spirituel." Et combien de millions ont entendu et obéi à ce saint et affectueux appel—se sont pressés au pied de l'autel, y ont rencontré, en esprit, leur Seigneur, y ont trouvé, la paix avec Dieu, y ont eu l'Esprit témoin dans leur propre esprit, qu'ils sont les enfants de Dieu," y ont trouvé la lumière dans leur ignorance, la force dans leur faiblesse, la consolation dans leurs moments de profonde douleur et de tentation! Combien y sont allés avec un cœur brisé et sont revenus en paix! Combien se sont approchés de ce sacrement faibles, de toute la faiblesse de ce qu'on peut appeler l'enfance de leur profession chrétienne, et y ont accumulé des forces pour remplir les devoirs de la vie, et l'aptitude pour les jouissances du ciel!

iv. Mais jusqu'ici nous avons considéré l'enfant comme nourrisson de l'Eglise, au milieu de la santé et de la prospérité. Cependant les vicissitudes de cette scène variable, ne nous permettent pas d'espérer que cet état soit de longue durée. Le ciel serein s'obscurcira. Les liens du tabernacle vont être ébranlés. Bientôt la maladie va poser sa main desséchée sur lui. Même peut-être dès sa plus tendre enfance il aura à endurer les ravages de la consomption ; ou plus tard les attaques cruelles d'une maladie encore plus aiguë. Ou si sa santé se maintient longtemps en bon état—il aura peut-être à remplir le pénible devoir de veiller sur les progrès de la maladie près de ceux qu'il aime plus que lui-même. Dans ces circonstances l'Eglise l'abandonne-t-elle ? Au contraire, il n'y a point de langage humain, je crois, pour dire la solennité, l'attention et la tendresse quelle apporte, pour lui procurer ce dont il a besoin dans ces moments de souffrance physique ou mentale. Qui a jamais porté le service appelé " visite des malades " dans une chambre de maladie ou de souffrance sans qu'il ait forcément senti, qu'il respire l'esprit le plus pur du livre dont il est tiré, qu'il tient le langage du seul consolateur suffisant des misérables. Et ces paroles, quelles sont-elles ? " O Sauveur du monde, qui par ta croix et ton sang précieux, nous a rachetés ; sauve-nous et nous aide, nous t'en supplions humblement, O Seigneur !" Puis ensuite s'adressant au malade :" le Seigneur tout-puissant, qui est une tour et une forteresse pour tous ceux qui mettent leur confiance en lui, sous le pouvoir de qui tout ce qui est au ciel, sur la terre et sous la terre, fléchit et se soumet, soit dès maintenant et à jamais ta défense, et te fasse connaître et sentir qu'il n'y a point d'autre nom sous le ciel donné aux hommes, dans lequel et par lequel tu puisses recevoir la santé et le salut, si ce n'est le seul nom de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ. Nous te recommandons à la grâce, à la miséricorde et à la protection de Dieu. Que le Seigneur te bénisse et te garde. Que le Seigneur fasse luire sa face sur toi, et te fasse grâce. Que le Seigneur lève sa face sur toi et te donne la paix, dès maintenant et à jamais." Peut-il un cœur que l'esprit de Dieu a visité, manquer de répondre à ce langage ? Combien il est vrai que l'Eglise est la consolation de ses enfants ! Ici je ne puis m'empêcher de citer quelques lignes magnifiques dans lesquelles

un vrai poète témoigne sa gratitude à celle qu'il appelle la "Mère des Martyrs," pour l'emploi de cet admirable service :*

"Where may we learn that gentle spell?
Mother of Martyrs, thou canst tell!
Thou, who didst watch thy dying Spouse
With pierced hands and bleeding brows;
Whose tears from age to age are shed
O'er sainted sons untimely dead.
If e'er we charm a soul in pain,
Thine is the key-note of our strain.

"How sweet with thee to lift the latch,
Where Faith has kept her midnight watch,
Smiling on woe; with thee to kneel
Where fix'd, as if one prayer could heal;
She listens till her pale eyes glow
With joy wild health can never know;
And each calm feature, ere we read,
Speaks silently thy glorious creed."

Keble, Vis. of Sick.

v. Il reste encore une phase dans l'histoire touchante de l'homme. Enfin la maladie a achevé son œuvre. Le corps et l'âme sont séparés. Le corps descend dans la poussière et l'esprit monte vers celui qui l'a donné. Beaucoup de brillantes perspectives sont assombries. Beaucoup d'avenues sont fermés à l'espérance et à la joie. Beaucoup de monuments de bonheur en famille, qui avait coûté des années à former, sont réduits à rien. La moitié de notre âme—l'enfant de notre amour—l'ami de longues années à l'épreuve, constant et aimant est parti—l'œil et le cœur ne voient plus que le vide, vide qui vient d'être fait et que rien sur la terre ne saurait remplir. Dans ces touchantes et affreuses circonstances, avec quelle tendresse l'Eglise ne s'acquitte-t-elle pas de son dernier devoir d'obligation et de bonté! Ouvrez de nouveau votre Livre de Prières, et voyez comme elle marche à la rencontre de celui que pleure, vers l'entrée du cimetière, avec ces paroles remplies de consolation sur les lèvres: "Je suis la résurrection et la vie, dit le Seigneur: celui qui croit en moi vivra quand même il serait mort. Et quiconque vit, et croit en moi ne mourra jamais." Ecoutez de quelle manière elle lui adresse le magnifique langage du passage de St. Paul, dans lequel il établit la doctrine de la résurrection, et qu'il conclut par un mouvement d'une

* La crainte d'altérer la sublimité de ces vers ne me permet pas d'en faire la traduction.

sainte éloquence qui établit à lui seul sa divine origine : "Voici, je vous dis un mystère :" Nous ne dormirons pas tous, mais nous serons tous changés ; en un moment, en un clin d'œil, à la dernière trompette : car la trompette sonnera, et les morts ressusciteront incorruptibles, et nous serons changés. Car il faut que ce corps corruptible revête l'incorruptibilité, et que ce corps mortel revête l'immortalité. Or, quand ce corps corruptible aura revêtu l'incorruptibilité, et que ce corps mortel aura revêtu l'immortalité, alors sera accomplie la parole qui est écrite : La mort est absorbée par la victoire. O mort, où est ton aiguillon ? O sépulcre, où est ta victoire ? Or, l'aiguillon de la mort, c'est le péché ; et la puissance du péché, c'est la loi. Mais grâces soient rendues à Dieu, qui donne la victoire par notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ." L'Eglise ne manque pas non plus d'ajouter les conseils solennels trouvés par l'Apôtre dans ces précieuses promesses : "C'est pourquoi, mes frères bien-aimés, soyez fermes, inébranlables, abondants toujours dans l'œuvre du Seigneur ; sachant que notre travail n'est pas vain auprès du Seigneur."

Mais je ne dois pas insister davantage sur les passages et les moyens employés par l'Eglise de notre amour pour accomplir la charge importante qui lui est confiée. N'en a-t-on pas assez dit déjà pour montrer que l'Eglise est la garde en l'Ecriture, sage, sainte et tendre de ceux qui lui sont confiés ? Ne dirait-on pas qu'une bénédiction spécialle est descendue sur ceux de ses premiers pères qui ont arrangé ces services ! En somme, peut-on espérer trouver dans un monde déchu, un monument de vérités et de pratiques religieuses plus fidèlement formé sur un modèle Chrétien, et mieux adapté pour être utile aux intérêts du Christianisme et aux âmes du genre humain ! Quelles formules d'homme peuvent être comparées à celles-ci ; quelles supplications improvisées approchent, même à grande distance, d'un pareil degré de simplicité, de ferveur, d'universalité et de dévotion scripturaire. Dans quelles prières l'individualité parait-elle moins ? Donnez-moi, dit le pieux Herbert "les prières de ma mère l'Eglise, il n'y en a pas de semblables." Un pieux Wesleyen en a traduit une partie dans la langue des Indiens : un dévot dissident en a traduit une autre partie en Chinois, et un autre dissident encore, très-distingué aussi, les place au plus haut rang parmi les écrits non inspirés ! Ces prières, que tous

ceux qui diffèrent de l'Eglise s'accordent à considérer comme ce qu'il y a de mieux, sont très-probablement supérieures à toutes les autres.

Ayant été aussi loin je ne me servirai pas d'autre argument nouveau en faveur de la chère ancienne Eglise de nos pères. Je préfère moi-même, à tout argument, celui que nous venons d'exposer, parceque un homme n'a qu'à recourir à son Livre de Prières, et il en verra de suite la force; et chaque fois qu'il ouvrira son livre, de nouvelles lumières viendront le frapper, il ne pourra même aller nulle part sans rencontrer cet argument; il le trouvera au Baptême, à la Confirmation, à la table du Seigneur, dans chaque chambre de malade et chaque funéraille de village. La naissance, la santé, la maladie, la mort le lui rappellent également. J'espère qu'enfin il apprendra à comprendre et à estimer ce qu'il rencontre si souvent.

Quant à moi, je ne trouve aucune Eglise comparable à l'ancienne. J'aime l'ombre de la vieille vigne et l'abri du vieux mur sous lequel mes pères ont bien vécu et sont morts heureux. Je m'attache à leurs prières, à leurs cérémonies, à leurs pierres tumulaires, à leur Seigneur, à leur foi, à leur baptême, à leur Père et notre Père—à leur Dieu et notre Dieu." C'est un bonheur pour moi de trouver, dans un monde qui passe, s'évanonit et périt, quelque chose qui dure. Et j'espère par la grâce infinie de Dieu, d'être un adorateur humble, veillant et aimant dans cette sainte et heureuse compagnie du peuple du Seigneur; jusqu'à ce que je change l'église qui est sur la terre pour celle qui est dans le ciel.

Les lignes suivantes expriment si bien mes sentiments que je ne pourrais peut-être rien faire de mieux que de les citer en terminant:

"I love the ivy-mantled tower,
  Rack'd by the storms of passing years;
The grave, whose melancholy flower,
  Was nourish'd by a martyr's tears:

"I love the organ's joyous swell,
  Sweet echo of the heav'nly ode;
I love the cheerful village bell,
  Faint emblem of the call of God:

"Waked by the sound, I bend my feet,
  I bid my swelling sorrows cease;
I do but touch the mercy-seat,
  And hear the small still voice of peace;

"And as the ray of evening fades,
I love amidst the dead to stand;
And seem, amidst the deepening shades,
To meet again the holy band.

"Long be our fathers' temple ours;
Woe to the hand by which it falls·
A thousand spirits watch its towers,
A host of angels guard its walls."

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LE

CULTE PUBLIC

A

HAUTE VOIX.

PAR LE

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LE CULTE PUBLIC A HAUTE VOIX.

ROMAINS, XV. 6.

"*Afin que, d'un même cœur et d'une même bouche, vous glorifiiez le Dieu qui est le Père de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ.*"

DANS plusieurs endroits de ses Epitres, St. Paul nous dit que la persévérance dans la prière, est la marque distinctive de ceux qui ont été appelés des ténèbres du paganisme à la pure lumière de l'Evangile.

Nous devons, tous tant que nous sommes, considérer la ferveur et la persévérance dans nos demandes au trone de la grâce, "Priant sans cesse par des prières et des supplications," non senlement comme un devoir important, mais aussi comme un bien grand privilége, privilége que nous devons exercer avec joie, en particulier, en famille et dans les assemblées publiques de l'église. Je vais maintenant faire quelques observations sur la manière dont on doit prendre part au culte public dans la maison de Dieu.

Nos réunions dans le temple du Seigneur ont été instituées pour deux fins: d'abord, afin d'instruire les fidèles dans la justice pour les avancer dans les connaissances Chrétiennes par la lecture et la prédication de la parole de Dieu, et ensuite d'unir nos prières et nos louanges et les faire monter en commun vers l'Auteur et le Distributeur de tout bien. Ce dernier objet de notre culte est peut-être le plus important des deux. "Ma maison sera appelée maison de prière;" MAISON DE PRIÈRE, *par excellence.*

Cependant, afin que les deux buts qui nous amènent à l'église soient atteints, il est évident qu'une attention grave et sérieuse est absolument nécessaire. Si l'on vient à l'église

simplement pour s'acquitter d'une observance extérieure et de forme, sans s'efforcer de faire que le cœur et l'esprit prennent part à l'objet et à l'affaire qui doivent nous occuper dans le lieu Saint, il est certain qu'on se rend coupable d'une sorte d'insulte envers celui en l'honneur et au service duquel l'église est consacrée.

J'aime à croire, mes amis, que nous nous garderons toujours de toute irrévérence et de toute légèreté dans notre conduite, et que quand nous nous réunirons ensembles, nous tacherons, selon les paroles de notre texte, "avec un même cœur et une même bouche de glorifier le Dieu qui est le Père de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ."

Avec un même esprit. La disposition de l'esprit est évidemment ce qui'l y a de plus important. "Dieu est esprit et ceux qui l'adorent doivent l'adorer en esprit et en vérité." Dans notre culte public nous devous nous efforcer "de prier avec l'esprit aussi bien qu'avec le cœur." Pour que nos âmes soient en état de glorifier Dieu dans le culte public, nous devons, avant que de nous rendre à l'église, les mettre dans une disposition calme et sériense, étant le moins possible distrait par les soins, les soucis et les follies du monde. Une fois entré dans l'église et que nous avons pris notre place accoutumée, nous devons implorer avec ferveur cet Etre, "devant qui tous les cœurs sont ouverts, à qui tous les désirs sont connus, et à qui nul secret n'est caché;" afin qu'il lui plaise de sanctifier nos cœurs par l'inspiration de son St. Esprit;" qu'il nous rende fervents et attentifs dans nos prières; qu'il daigne répandre dans nos cœurs l'esprit de grâce et de prière et fasse que les "paroles de nos lèvres et les méditations de nos cœurs soient agréables en sa présence."

Durant tout l'office de l'église, nous devous tenir nos esprits dans la disposition la plus attentive et la plus dévote possible. Il est très-difficile, peut être même impossible de réprimer et d'arrêter la divagation de nos pensées, même quand nous désirons le plus être sérieux et receuillis. Nous devons, cependant, faire ce qui est en nous, pour empêcher ces distractions et demander humblement à Dieu de nous pardonner nos nombreuses fautes et nos manquements, et de nous affermir par sa grâce contre cette mauvais pente de l'esprit.

Si tous s'unissaient ensemble pour glorifier Dieu, nonseulement, "avec un même esprit," mais encore "AVEC UNE MÊME BOUCHE," cela contriburait, je pense, à soutenir l'attention et à ajouter de la vie et de l'âme au culte public. Ce que je veux dire c'est que toute la congrégation doit se joindre à haute voix, dans les parties du service où le Livre de Prières indique de le faire. Tous les Chrétiens doivent reconnaitre la force de cette injonction de l'Apôtre, "Que tout se fasse avec décence et dans l'ordre," et tous les véritables membres de l'Eglise d'Angleterre doivent reconnaitre la convenance et le devoir positif de se soumettre aux ordres et aux instructions de l'église quand ils sont conformes à la parole de Dieu. Faites attention, donc, à ce que prescrit le Livre de Prières, afin de vous joindre à haute voix dans le culte public.

Au moment de commencer le service divin, le ministre disant, "O Seigneur, ouvre nos lèvres," la congrégation est sensée répondre, "et notre bouche annoncera ta louange." Que la bouche de la congrégation annonce donc les louanges de Dieu, non senlement à voix basse, comme quelqu'un qui ne parle qu'a lui-même et à Dieu, (1 Cor. xiv. 28,)—mais à haute voix, le ton, tout en en étant respectueux et modéré doit cependant être tel, qu'elle soit entendu dans la maison de Dieu.

Un grand nombre de nos congrégations sont dans l'habitude de s'unir bien exactement dans les Psaumes lorsqu'on en fait la lecture. *Je désire infiniment que vous vous unissiez de même pour faire toutes les* RÉPONSES, *dans la litanie et après chacun des commandements ; aussi en récitant la confession générale, l'Oraison Dominicale chaque fois qu'on la récite, et les symboles. Je désire particulièrement, que tous se joignent pour dire,* AMEN, *après les prières et les collectes.* Elles sont offertes à Dieu par le ministre au nom de la congrégation, mais tous les membres doivent les suivre dévotement et s'y joindre de cœur et d'esprit, et pour en faire leurs propres demandes, à la fin de chacune, ils doivent dire, à haute voix, *Amen.* Dans le culte consacré au temple des Juifs, culte institué par leur grand législateur, selon les ordonnances qu'il avait reçuees sur le Mont Sina, de celui la même qui était l'objet de ce culte,—dans ce culte du temple des Juifs, nous voyons, très-souvent, le peuple s'unir

à *haute voix*, soit dans des courtes réponses ou pour dire, *Amen ;* et rappelez, vous que le Psaume 106 termine par cette injonction, "Que tout le peuple dise, Amen. Louez le Seigneur." De même nous trouvons dans le seizième chapitre du premier livre des Chroniques. "Et tout le peuple dit amen, et on lona le Seigneur." A la dédicace du temple de Salomon, comme il est écrit dans les six et septième chapitres du second livre des Chroniques, après une description des autres cérémonies de cette fête solennelle, il est dit que le peuple y prit part. "Tous les enfants d'Israël se prosternaient la face en terre et ils adoraient et louaient le Seigneur disant, car il est bon, sa miséricorde n'aura jamais de fin."

Trop souvert nos congrégations paraissent froides, languissantes et inanimées dans cette portion du service où on les suppose occupées à prier en commun, à offrir leurs supplications collectives au trone de la grâce. La voix du ministre se fait entendre, mais dans trop de circonstances, il n'y a que fort peu de personnes qui y répondent, le reste du peuple garde le silence et la taciturnité du someil.

A Dieu ne plaise, que ce que j'ai dit sur ce sujet, soit mésentendu et mal pris, qu'on puisse eroire que je veuille encourager le moindre désir de paraitre et de faire parade de sa dévotion. A Dieu ne plaise qu'ancun de vous soit mu par l'esprit de ces hypocrites qui, "aiment à prier debout dans les synagogues et aux coins des rues, afin d'être vus des hommes." (Mat. vi. 5.) A Dieu ne plaise qu'aucun de vous se joigne au culte public de l'église par un esprit d'ostentation. Je suis persuadé que, chez plusieurs personnes, la répugnance à prendre part à *haute voix* dans le service divin, vient d'un esprit d'humilité et d'une défiance qui ne cherche que l'écart. Mais on doit se rappeler, que, si d'un côté nous pouvons à peine nous garder assez soigneusement contre le désir des louanges des hommes comme motif principal de l'accomplissement de nos devoirs; de l'autre, le Seigneur, lui-même, nous commande expressément de "Laisser luire notre lumière devant les hommes afin qu'ils glorifient notre Père qui est dans les cieux." Et, certainement, cette promotion de la gloire de Dieu doit être le résultat de notre union fervente et à *haute voix* dans le culte public. Nous témoignons ainsi que nous

ne sommes pas plongés dans l'assoupissement ou dans une sorte de surdité, mais que nous donnons notre attention au devoir dans lequel nous professons d'être engagés. Ainsi nous nous rangeons, pour ainsi dire, du côté du Seigneur, nous montrons par là que nous n'avous pas honte de l'adorer ouvertement, en offrant nos prières et nos louanges à *haute voix*, de maniere a être vu et entendu de tout le peuple dans les parvis de la maison du Seigneur.

Je pense que votre propre observation et votre réflection vous convaineront que cette pratique sera suivie de consequences salutaires pour ceux qui en seront témoins. Plusieurs qui gardent maintenant le silence, seront encouragés par cet exemple à se joindre à haute voix dans le service. Beaucoup qui sont inattentifs deviendront receuillis. La congrégation entière montrera par plus d'extérieur et de réalité, qu'elle est une réunion de frères Chrétiens unis ensemble de cœur et de voix pour adorer leur Créateur et leur Rédempteur. Ceux là même qui ont peu de religion dans le cœur pourront en être influencés et touchés, et l'effet dont parle St. Paul, étant l'effet probable du bon emploi de ces dons de l'Esprit qui étaient accordés à la primitive église, pourrait jusquà un certain point en procéder. Si tous s'unissent avec ferveur et à haute voix dans la prière en commun, "et qu'il entre quelqu'infidèle ou quelqu'un du commun, il est convaincu par tous, et il est jugé de tous; et ensuite pliant le jenoux, il adorera Dieu et il publiera que Dieu est véritablement parmi vous. (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.)

Nous voyons plusieurs passages de la Sainte Ecriture où il est dit que les serviteurs de Dieu, s'unissaient ensemble pour prier à haute voix et rendre des actions de grâces à leur Créateur et Conservateur. Ainsi nous voyons Moïse et les enfants d'Israël unir ensemble leurs voix en chantant les louanges de Dieu et le glorifiant après leur délivrance miraculeuse de l'armée de Pharaon. Ainsi nous est il marqué dans les Actes des Apôtres, que quand Pierre et Jean revinrent vers leurs frères, ils leur racontèrent tout ce que les principaux sacrificateurs et les sénateurs leur avaient dit. "Ce qu'ayant entendu, ils élevèrent tous d'un accord leur voix à Dieu, et dirent, Seigneur, tu es le Dieu qui a fait le Ciel, la terre et la mer, et toute les choses qui'y sont." (Actes, iv. 24.)

Les esprits bienheureux et les saints dans le ciel sont représentés dans le livre de l'Apocalypse s'unissant ensemble, dix mille fois dix mille et des milliers de milliers, en actions de grâces et en louanges, "Disant à haute voix L'Agneau qui a été immolé est digne de recevoir la puissance, les richesses, la sagesse, la force, l'honneur, la gloire et la louange." (Apocalypse, v. 11, 12.) Et une voix sortant du trone, disait: Louez notre Dieu, vous tous ses serviteurs, et vous qui le craignez petits et grands. Il ajoute desuite, "J'entendis encore comme la voix d'une grande multitude, telle que le bruit des grosses eaux, et celui des grands tonnerres, qui disait, Halléluiah! car le Seigneur Dieu, le Tout-Puissant est entré dans son règne." (Apoc. xix. 5, 6.) Quel contraste cela fait avec la nonchalante et silencieuse indifférence et l'inattention qui règnent dans beaucoup de nos congrégations.

J'aime à croire, mes amis, que vous prenez volontiers part à ce que je viens de dire et j'espère que tous, vous verrez et sentirez combien plus d'intérêt et de vie sont donnés au service de l'eglise, combien plus l'objet du culte public est encouragé; quand le peuple se joint régulièrement et dévotement dans ces parties du service où la liturgie l'indique. Nos dévotions et nos affections spirituelles sont malheureusement si sujettes à devenir languissantes et sans vie, que nous devons être bien-aises de pouvoir recourir à tous les moyens qui sont à notre disposition pour les animer et les exciter. Supplious instamment le Dieu Tout-Puissant d'élever à lui nos cœurs, d'y répandre le véritable esprit de grâce et de prière, d'élever et de spiritualiser nos pensées et nos affections, de nous faire sentir que "Dieu est esprit, et que ceux qui l'adorent doivent l'adorer en esprit et en vérité," "Que le Dieu de patience et de consolation vous fasse donc la grâce d'avoir, les uns et les autres, un même sentiment selon Jésus-Christ; afin que, d'un même cœur et d'une même bouche, vous glorifiiez le Dieu qui est le Père de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ."

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